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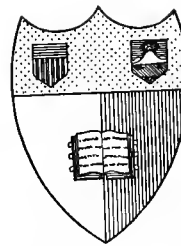
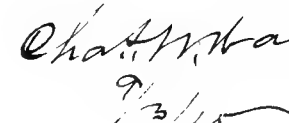


CHARLES WILLIAM WASON
COLLECTION
CHINA AND THE CHINESE

Stories of Everyday Life
in Modern China



BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

ESSAYS ON THE CHINESE LANGUAGE.

Demy 8vo, vi.-496 pp. Shanghai, 1889.

Among the Contents may be noted: The Cultivation of their Language by the Chinese—Origin and Early History of the Language—Terms relating to Death and Burial—Foreign Words in Chinese—The Influence of Buddhism on the Chinese Language, etc.

To be had, half-bound, of D. NUTT, for 15s. net.

Stories of Everyday Life in Modern China

Told by Chinese and
Done into English

By T. Watters
Late H.M. Consul at Foochow

London
David Nutt, 270–271, Strand
1896

PREFACE

A FEW words seem to be required to introduce this little book to the reader. The stories which it contains were told to the translator by bits at different times and in various parts of the Chinese Empire. They are narratives of actual Chinese life of recent times in several phases and stages. The translator served for above thirty years in the country, and in this time he was stationed for longer or shorter periods at many of the Coast Treaty Ports and at places which may be regarded as in the interior. He also made many voyages on the coast and many journeys by land and water in various parts of the country. It was on such journeys that the main incidents of several of the stories here retold were narrated by native fellow-travellers to beguile weary hours on boat or by the road. The narrators of the stories were of various classes, including mandarins, doctors, teachers, business-men, and peasants. But it is understood that names of persons and places are fictitious.

The first part of the "Autobiography of a Mandarin" is little more than an abstract of several long

conversations with a retired viceroy, once a man of great power and distinction. He was a very genial and communicative old man, very quick-tempered and impulsive. He remembered the events and circumstances of his boyhood, and told with great minuteness of detail, and with much emotion, the hardships and privations which his parents bore in order that he might be enabled to become a mandarin. His own history, in this respect, he said, was like that of very many officials. Every family, he said, wanted to be able to boast of having a mandarin among its members, and he lamented that the official life had in recent years put every other career out of esteem.

The story of "The Constant Husband" may seem very improbable, and some of its incidents are certainly unusual. But they were real occurrences, and some of them were testified to by a colleague. The visits to the grave to have a talk were matter of personal observation. It is a very common thing for a woman to visit the grave of her husband or father and tell a long story of her grievances, but it is an exceedingly rare occurrence for a husband to visit his wife's grave to tell the news of the family.

The story of the "Wicked Mandarin" was told partly by a neighbour who professed to speak from actual knowledge and observation, and partly by one of the victims. Such selfish cruelty and continued extortion carried on with impunity and apparent

success are, it is to be hoped, very rare in the country.

On the other hand, the character and experiences of Mr. Yang in "Heathen and Christian" are perhaps more frequent among the Chinese than foreigners imagine. The native helper or evangelist in this story was a man well known to many Europeans. He was quiet and unassuming, of perfect faith and great zeal, but without much knowledge or experience.

The translator hopes that the reader will find the few narratives here related not quite uninteresting or unprofitable. He regrets very much his inability to reproduce in English the condensed expressiveness of the Chinese with its quaint forms of speech and picturesque phrases. Much also that is strictly Chinese in ways of thought and feeling has probably vanished in the translation. But from the stories as they stand the unprejudiced reader may perhaps learn that there are better and more amiable traits in the characters of some Chinese men and women than are regarded as possible for any of them by many foreigners.

CONTENTS

The Mandarin who became a Monk

YOU have come on board in good time, sir. The steamer is ready to start for Shanghai, and the captain is only waiting the arrival of the Ningpo despatches. I hope that you enjoyed your visit to Puto yesterday, and that you had time to see most of its more important sights. Yes, the whole island is a curious and interesting place, and it has a considerable number of sacred objects and of religious buildings of various kinds, large and small. You cannot have gone over all these, nor can you have seen the whole of the sacred island, and you were right to restrict your visits to a few of the more important sacred buildings which are well worth seeing. The monasteries inscribed with the names Pu-chi ("Universal Salvation"), and Fa-yü ("Rain of Buddhism"), and popularly known respectively as the Front and Back Monasteries, are the two best and largest. As you must have observed, the latter is an extensive and flourishing establishment, very much frequented by pilgrims and other visitors. In the large dining-hall of this monastery meals are going all day, forenoon and afternoon, for the benefit of the strangers who

come as pilgrims. The rules of our religious order as to the time for taking food are relaxed here in favour of those brethren who come on pilgrimages from distant places. Meals are prepared for these every day out of hours; but the resident brethren in this and the other monasteries are supposed to adhere to the rules of the discipline. The number of Buddhist monks who come every year from all parts of China, and even from foreign countries, on pilgrimage to this island is very large.

You are right in your surmise, Mr. Foreigner; I am not a native of this part of the Empire. I am a monk of a monastery in the hills a few miles to the west of Peking, and I was born in a country village in that neighbourhood. My name in religion is Fa-chang ("Growth in Buddhism"), and I have been a professed religious for about thirty years. In the course of that time I have visited several of the sacred places of Buddhism in China, and this was my fourth visit to Puto. The pilgrimage from which I am now returning was undertaken for the purpose of returning thanks for prayer answered, and in fulfilment of an old vow.

That interesting monk whom you observed at the Fa-yü monastery, and who aroused your curiosity about him, was most probably the abbot of the monastery. He is a man of medium height and of slight figure, dark-coloured, and not very Chinese in appearance. He is now about sixty years of age, and is still a strong and healthy-looking man, though he is

not so robust and active as he was a few years ago. It is quite true that in some respects, in his walk and bearing, for example, and in his way of talking, he is not very like an ordinary Buddhist monk. But, nevertheless, he is one of the firmest, most unquestioning believers, and one of the most enthusiastic disciples of all the professed Buddhists on the island. As you noticed, his dialect is that of the Peking district, and his conversation and manners are very much those of a man of the world. The monk has a strange history, which you may be interested to hear. I can tell you as much as I know of his life and career on the way up to Shanghai as we have leisure and opportunity. My information has been derived partly from the abbot and his family, and partly from an old monk of whom I have to make mention.

The abbot's name in religion is Ch'êng-hsin ("Sincerity-faith"), but his original name in the world was Kangchi. His family belongs to one of the Banner divisions introduced by the present dynasty, and he was born about the year 1830 in a garrison-station, at a place a few miles distant from Peking. His father, who had served both at the capital and in the provinces, had risen to a high official position. He was a man of good character and abilities, and had much influence with the higher authorities. He was also the father of a large family, in which Kangchi was the third son. The latter when a boy received the usual education of a Banner official's son, and

went through the training necessary for the public service among the Bannermen. As soon as he was of the proper age he was drafted off to serve in his Banner. At this time he took much pleasure in falconry, riding, archery, and the other out-of-door accomplishments of young gentlemen of his class. He was not given to reading, and he knew little of learning or literature beyond what he had been obliged to acquire at school. But in this early period of his life there was a genial old monk who presided over a Buddhist temple in the neighbourhood of his home with whom he had made acquaintance, and from him Kangchi acquired a considerable amount of miscellaneous information. This monk was not deeply read in the sacred canon of his religion, but he had clear and decided views on religion generally, and on man's duty in life. He had travelled through much of the Empire, and had conversed with men from all the provinces. His general learning also was extensive, and he had a pleasant way of imparting his knowledge and opinions.

Kangchi was a steady, industrious, intelligent, and well-disciplined young officer, and he rose quickly to the rank of captain in his corps. This was his actual rank when the force to which he belonged was called into active service, and sent to the field to take part in the war of resistance to the invasion of our country by your soldiers and those of the French. There was also at this time, as you know, widespread rebellion among the Chinese of the southern and central pro-

vinces, and in the west, while even in the north open disaffection had already appeared. Some years before Kangchi was called away with his Banner corps he had been married to a young lady, the daughter of a high Banner official. But though he made a fairly good husband, and his wife was an excellent, wise, and sensible lady, and devoted to her husband's interests, yet I do not think they were well mated, or had any great mutual affection. On the departure of her husband for the wars, Mrs. Kangchi went, according to arrangement, with her daughter and infant son to the home of her husband's parents.

Kangchi went through all the campaign against the foreign invasion, and suffered great hardships and privations, though I do not remember to have heard that he received any wounds, or did any actual fighting with Western soldiers. He had to serve, however, against the native rebels also, and he must have distinguished himself in some conspicuous way, for he was promoted, and rose quickly to be a colonel. When the war was over, and the country was again free from the troubles and disorders caused by foreign invasion and native rebellion, Kangchi returned with his Banner corps to garrison.

But he did not wish to lead the inglorious idle life of a soldier in barracks, and after a few months at home he applied for employment again in active service. He had to wait a considerable time and make repeated applications, but at length he received the welcome news that he was to have a good civil

appointment. In due course his official orders arrived appointing him Acting Taotai of one of the circuits in the interior of the province of Kuangtung. He was sent thither armed with military powers and he was instructed to proceed to his post without delay. As his term of office at this distant place was likely to extend over several years, he took his wife and children with him.

The province of Kuangtung is notorious, I understand, for the quarrelsome, turbulent character of its rural and village population. At the time of Kangchi's appointment there was more than the usual amount of lawless disorder, to a large extent a legacy of the great rebellion in various parts of the province. Within the large district which constituted his jurisdiction, at one place the Hakkas, descendants of settlers from the north in recent times, and the Puntis, or old inhabitants, were waging open internecine war; at another place, one large and powerful clan had taken the field against another clan of the same district, and the rival forces held possession of heights on opposite sides of a stream. In another part of the country the people had risen in revolt against unjust and excessive taxation newly imposed, had driven the revenue officers away, and had destroyed their offices. It was especially with a view to the suppression of these disorders by the military forces to be put at his disposal that Kangchi had been sent to this district. Very soon after his arrival he applied

himself with great vigour and earnestness to the work of crushing anarchy and restoring order. Before a year was over he was able to report that for a large part of his jurisdiction disorder had been suppressed forcibly, and that the lawless agitators in some districts had been exterminated. He had instituted inquiry into the causes of the fighting and agitation, and had learned the particulars of the taxation troubles. He had then put himself at the head of his troops and gone to the scene of feud and battle. By his presence and prompt action, and by the thorough measures he adopted, he forced the fighting clans to come to terms and to give hostages for their future good conduct. The troubles between the people and the tax-collectors were also settled in a manner satisfactory to both sides. But the fierce fights between Puntis and Hakkas still continued, and many little battles had to be fought and much stratagem used before this savage, relentless warfare was brought to an end. At last, however, Kangchi was able to report the utter rout of the Hakkas in an important engagement between them and his troops. And soon after he was able to report the complete submission of these Hakkas and of the Puntis also to the constituted authorities, and he stated in detail the precautions which he was taking against the recurrence of similar feuds in future. The Emperor rewarded him in the usual manner and gave him the substantive rank of Taotai, retaining him at the post he held.

When all the fighting was over and the criminal instigators to riot had been caught and executed, the Taotai was at length able to live somewhat at ease in his yamên and to reflect on events and their causes and consequences. His mind now began to go back from time to time to the sieges, battles, and slaughters in which he had taken part or which he had witnessed, and to the executions which he had ordered. It was noticed by the other officials with whom he came into intercourse and by those who had served with him on the field, that he never boasted of his victories, and that he did not seem to like to have his battles discussed and his strategy praised. Nor did he listen with pleasure to talk about his bold and fearless administration of justice by which he had freed the district from the powerful agitators who had kept it in ruinous unrest for several years. In fact, he had come to look on the slaughter of men under any pretext as a crime, and it repented him that he had been forcibly concerned in the violent taking of so many human lives. Gradually the thought of his sin troubled him exceedingly, and day and night he could not have peace. It was not that the ghosts of the slain, or the groans of the dying, or the wails of the widows and orphans haunted and worried him. He was not the man to see ghosts or to be scared by strange noises. Nor did he ever feel himself impelled by a tormenting conscience to do works of merit on behalf of those slain by him in battle. His first misgiving about killing

in warfare had arisen long ago, and the carnage and misery he had seen as the result of fighting in his new jurisdiction had raised his early misgivings into the solemn convictions of his mature life.

These convictions were permanently confirmed by his observation of daily life among the people over whom he was ruling. And when he reflected on the clan and tribal fights of the district, he saw that the desire to shed blood and the fierce joy of taking an enemy's life were the inevitable results of the unchecked development of human passions. He saw clearly also that it was hatred, malice, envy, greed, and anger which, unmastered at first and afterwards mastering beyond help, produced such fierce bloody fights as those which had taken place, fights of neighbour with neighbour, and even of kinsman with kinsman. If the depraved moral constitution could be suppressed or quite changed, he thought, then feud and strife would cease. It was a terrible thing to take human life, and still worse to have taken many lives; and it seemed to him that he must have yielded to evil feelings and wicked promptings in fighting against and slaying his fellow-creatures.

The question now arose in Kangchi's mind, what was his duty in the light of his present convictions? And the answer which seemed to come to him was, that he should seek a place of repentance for sins committed; that he should cut away all evil affections and passions, and lead hereafter a pure, sinless life in

which he could make some amends for himself and guide others to the noble path which leads to complete extinction of passions. He has stated that up to this time he had never thought of taking the vows of a Buddhist monk or of becoming a Taoist recluse. But now he began to think that the only way for him to carry out his idea of a sinless life of atonement was to abandon office and family and all the cares and affairs of the secular life, and to become a Buddhist monk and retire from the world. It cost him, he has told me, many a pang and many an anxious hour to carry out his resolve when he had made it after mature consideration. He had given hostages to fortune, and he found it hard to take the course of renunciation and self-denial to which he felt himself drawn by an irresistible impulse.

Kangchi frequently talked with his wife in private about the remorse he felt for the lives he had taken, and for the useless and excessive carnage in which he had at times taken part. He spoke sadly and almost hopelessly of the terrible guilt he felt he had incurred, and mourned over the misery he had inflicted by his slaughters and executions. At the end of such talks he would sometimes say, half in joke and half in earnest, that after all a monk's life was indeed the best one. His wife tried to win her husband away from his gloomy musings and sad remorse, explaining to him that when slaying the rebels in battle he had only done his duty as imposed

on him by his lawful superiors. Moreover, she reminded him, by the slaughter or execution of some bad men, whole villages and districts had been restored to peace and security, and by this means much real lasting good had been effected.

To such arguments Kangchi would still reply that the disorders might have been suppressed without bloodshed by timely measures of good government; and that the commands of official superiors did not remove his guilt before the unseen powers. He had no right, he maintained, to kill others, to part flesh and bone. What consolation or recompense was it to the orphaned child and widowed wife that other children and other wives were enjoying quiet happy lives? Again, what compensation or satisfaction could ever be made either in this world or in another to those very numerous families into which misfortune and confusion had been brought by the slaughter or execution of those who should have continued the sacred offices due to ancestors?

Thus it came that Kangchi made up his mind to give up his family, renounce the world, and enter religion as a Buddhist monk. When he had made this resolution he kept his decision a secret and went about his work as usual. He formed his plans and arrangements, settled up all official matters, and was ready to go without any one in his yamên or household having even a suspicion that he was about to abandon his family and the world. On the evening of the day before which he was to depart, he told his

wife that he was obliged to go in the morning to Canton to see the Viceroy and the Tartar-General on business, and that he would probably be away for more than a month. Mrs. Kangchi was accustomed to her husband's absences on duty, so she did not feel unusually concerned on this occasion, and packed his clothes and bedding, and made the usual preparations for the journey and visit.

Early in the morning of the next day Kangchi set out from home, attended by a private and an official servant bearing a small amount of baggage. On arrival at Canton he took rooms in one of the large inns near the river and made arrangements as if for a stay of some duration. When he had reported himself to the Tartar-General he obtained an appointment for an interview. In the course of this interview Kangchi informed his Excellency of the course which he was taking, and explained his reasons and motives. The Tartar-General, who was a distant relative of Kangchi, was a genial old man of a happy careless disposition, who had no official conscience nor interest in public affairs, and was content with the existing state of things generally. This visit was a surprise to him, and he expressed himself amazed at the change which his relative was making: he could not understand the man's conduct, and tried to laugh him out of his resolve. Failing in the attempt, he sent Kangchi on to the Viceroy who, he hoped, would be able to make him abandon his absurd childish project.

When Kangchi told the Viceroy of his intention, and actually gave in his resignation of office, the Viceroy at first stormed and scolded in the common viceregal fashion. He was a small dirty man, with cruel grey eyes, a broad but prominent nose, an ugly mouth with a few teeth projecting here and there at random along his jaws. He could not speak Mandarin, but talked a local patois of some inland province. When excited or interested, he spoke very quickly and loudly, and it was often hard to make out what he said. The strange dialect, made still more uncouth by the compromises necessary for the deficient means of utterance and by a violent haste which hustled out words pell-mell deprived of half their due expression, was then unpleasant to hear, and almost impossible to understand. The Viceroy heard with manifest impatience Kangchi's reasons for the step which he was taking and rudely laughed them to scorn. His Excellency finally refused to permit Kangchi to resign and leave the province, and even threatened to impeach him to the throne, but in the meantime he referred the man back as a Bannerman to the Tartar-General, giving him a few days to reconsider his resolve.

After his return to the inn from this interview with the Viceroy, Kangchi learned that there was a steamer leaving for Shanghai at daylight next morning. He went quietly to the office, bought a ticket, and left the port secretly, attended only by his faithful northern servant. The other servant,

not finding his master in his room in the morning, and not being able to obtain any clue as to what had become of him, reported his absence in the yamêns of the Tartar-General and the Viceroy. He remained several days at the port waiting for information and making inquiries, and then went back to his master's yamên.

In the meantime Kangchi arrived in Shanghai and took up his lodgings in an inn on the French settlement. By this time he had made up his mind to go to the sacred island of Puto, obtain admission there into the Buddhist Church, and settle as a monk in one of the monasteries on the island. So after a short delay in Shanghai, he proceeded to Ningpo, and thence to Puto. On arrival there he went to one of the large monasteries and told his story to the chief monk. The latter explained the nature of the vows, and after a few days admitted him as a novice. Then in due course Kangchi was fully ordained and appointed to one of the large monasteries.

Mrs. Kangchi was greatly distressed and perplexed when the native servant returned and made his report of the mysterious disappearance of his master. But she was not a woman to beat her breast and rend her clothes in idle unavailing grief. She very quickly made up her mind to follow her husband and find him, and, with the help of her children, to bring him back to family life. So, after waiting a few weeks in the hope of receiving some letter or message, she had all the household furniture sold.

She then packed up her own clothing and jewellery and a supply of clothing for the children, together with some trinkets and other small articles of her husband's personal property, and proceeded with her children to Canton. Arrived there she at once set about making inquiries as to her husband's sayings and doings and the places he had visited during his short stay. But it seemed hopeless to try and obtain any clue to his fate. She could not find any one who could tell more than that the Taotai had been in the inn about a certain date, had seen the high authorities, and had disappeared. Many officials did that sort of thing, and it was often discovered after their disappearance that they had gone on a special mission or had been sent in haste to take up some important post. At last a man turned up who had travelled with Kangchi in the steamer to Shanghai, and he told Mrs. Kangchi of the voyage, and gave her the name of the inn in Shanghai to which her husband had gone. Mrs. Kangchi left by the first steamer for that port, and on arriving there proceeded directly to the house in which her husband had taken lodgings. But he had left long before she arrived, and the people of the house knew nothing about him; they only remembered that he was a quiet, easily satisfied official, and that he spoke the Court dialect.

Mrs. Kangchi remained for one or two months in Shanghai without obtaining any clue to her husband's fate. It was now several months since he had left

Canton, and as he had not any friends or acquaintances in Shanghai there seemed to be little chance of finding anything to put her on his track. But the season came round at which pilgrims, lay and clerical, from all parts of China flock to the island of Puto. Some go to pray to Kuanyin P'usa for mercies needed or favours desired, some to fulfil vows or return thanks for prayer answered, and many go merely to see the fanes and shrines and all the places hallowed by divine manifestations or associations. Now it happened that one evening about this time a party of pilgrims from the far north had returned from a visit to the island extending over several days. These men came to stay in an inn which was next door to the house in which Mrs. Kangchi was still lodging. The only male servant she retained, a man who had come with the family from the capital, was lounging one afternoon according to his custom in this inn, gossiping and picking up little shreds of news. The pilgrims were talking, and the servant, attracted by the northern speech, listened to the conversation which they were keeping up about Puto. He became especially interested when they went on to talk of a monk who was a man of intelligence and education, spoke Pekinese well, and who was evidently a man of authority and importance in the large monastery to which he was attached. From what the pilgrims said about this monk, Mrs. Kangchi's servant gradually became convinced that this superior monk

was no other than his lost master. So he did not lose much time in reporting what he had heard to his mistress. She was very grateful for the news, and recalling what her husband had often said about the monastic life she felt confident she had at last got a clue to his whereabouts. Acting in her usual prompt manner, within a few days after she heard the news she packed up and went with her children to Puto, determined to find her husband, or at least to obtain definite information about him.

Let us return to Kangchi for a moment. When he took the vows of a Buddhist monk, he entered on his new life with the ardour of an aspiring proselyte, earnestly desirous to atone for the past and make up for lost time. Having abilities, sincere faith, and earnest enthuaiasm far beyond all the other brethren, he soon rose to distinction among them. The rules of the discipline of his order and the daily routine of religious and other services, were soon mastered by him, and he then proceeded to a thorough and exhaustive reading of the canonical discourses, expositions, and discussions. But he became especially attracted to the worship of Kuanyin (the "Great Minister"), and the stories which he heard every day of the Pusa's compassion, giving miraculous help and deliverance in all kinds of trouble, sank deep into his heart. In the course of time, for his great piety and holy life and also on account of his former position and his profound learning, he was chosen abbot of the Fa-yü monastery. But at the time of his wife's

arrival in the island he had not yet attained that dignity. He was, however, at that time the superior of the establishment, which is on the side of the hill over to your left hand as you go up to the Fa-yü monastery.

When Mrs. Kangchi arrived at Puto she obtained lodging with some difficulty in the house of one of the monk's tenants. She first made the object of her visit known, and then set about making inquiries for her husband. The latter, on learning of his wife's arrival used every precaution to keep her ignorant of his place of abode and to escape a meeting with her. They did actually meet once on the narrow path which constitutes the highway, but his wife was so engaged with the chair-bearers, who were in danger of toppling over with her and the sedan, that she did not notice her husband, who passed close beside in another sedan. Mrs. Kangchi went to every monastery, and sent her servant out every day to watch for and inquire about her husband. When she met a monk on the road or saw one worshipping before an image, she looked eagerly into his face, but she could not see or hear of her husband. As she did not know his name in religion, she was at a great disadvantage in pursuing her inquiries.

At last, after a residence of some weeks in which she had exhausted every means at her disposal, an accidental circumstance occurred by which she learned beyond doubt her unhappy fortune. The incident from which she derived the information

happened in this wise. One morning Kangchi was, according to his daily custom, reading aloud a sacred book in his own private chamber, the door being open. His little son, who had been allowed and encouraged by his mother to go about the temples freely, escorted by a servant, toddled into the monk's room. The father did not notice the child, or did not think the little one could recognise him in his monk's garb, and so he continued his reading aloud. But the little boy recognised the voice and said: "What is dada saying? Dada take Small Pup (the nickname given to the child by his parents for good luck)—take Small Pup into his arms and come to mama." The father, who was very fond of his little son, kept an unmoved manner, and did not speak to the child. He merely ordered one of the temple attendants to remove him and hand him over to the servant. The little fellow was carried away screaming, and he was brought to his mother still crying and exclaiming against the bad man who had taken him away from dada. Mrs. Kangchi now knew that her husband was undoubtedly on the island and in the monastery in which her child had been. She saw clearly that it was useless for her to try to be reunited to him, as he had evidently renounced all family ties and taken the vows of a professed religious. So she again packed up and returned to Shanghai, with the inteution of going with her children to her husband's home and relatives.

She felt very doubtful about the kind of reception the friends would accord her when she came to them and told them that her husband had left her and become a monk in a distant isle. But Kangchi was not a man ever to do things by halves, and when he had proceeded to carry out his resolve, he sent his servant home to give the news to his relatives. So when his wife reached his brother's house, she found that the news had preceded her and that the way was prepared for her reception. Her husband's relatives received her and the children cordially, and treated them all with great commiseration and kindness.

When Kangchi became a Buddhist monk, he had, of course, to receive a new name, and that given to him, as has been stated, was Chêng-hsin, (Sincerity-faith), the name by which we may now call him. Among all the brethren on the island there is no one who leads so strict, so pure, and so elevated a life as he, and there is no one more devoted to the service of the great Pusa. Every morning he goes to one of the images of the Pusa, often the old iron one you may have noticed, and kneels before it and offers worship. He then recites the Liturgy of Kuanyin, the Father compassionate and of tender mercy to all the world. He prays to the Pusa for his own salvation and that of all mankind, and indeed of all sentient creatures. This prayer to Kuanyin he repeats during the day at appointed times.

Chêng-hsin can tell you from his own experience

many stories of miracles wrought by the Pusa in kindness to men and women in trouble. He also tries to convert every sceptic or unbeliever with whom he comes in contact. Nor will he allow any one, whether resident or visitor, to show any disrespect in word or act to the Pusa or his images. While I was on the island a rich Canton widow came to have a great service performed for the benefit of her late husband. This man had been, she said, a merchant, and as his business led him into dealings with foreigners, he had naturally acquired some evil ways. When he died there was a great funeral with all the pomp of a religious service, but some months afterwards the widow received an intimation from the lower world that her late husband was in very uncomfortable quarters, and that he was likely to remain there unless effectual masses could be said for him on earth. So the distressed widow came from her house in Shanghai in great state with a very large amount of silver, and arranged for a great religious service of intercession. The abbot Chêng-hsin consented, but he insisted that the service should be conducted in the orthodox way and not after the fashion followed by the Cantonese. He also obliged the widow to leave off her ornaments and finery, and to wear in the temple services and the procession a sober grey suit such as pleases Kuanyin.

In the southern parts of China women are great worshippers of Kuanyin, to whom they pray con-

stantly and make vows. Hence very many regard the Pusa as a goddess, and it is as such that the Pusa is worshipped, by the women at least, to a great extent. But as I have heard the abbot Chêng-hsin explain, this way of regarding Kuanyin is not correct, for the Pusa has no sex. Kuanyin is a spirit, he says, and assumes any form he pleases to effect any purpose he wishes to accomplish. Thus, according to the abbot's explanation, when a woman is in trouble about her husband or children she prays to Kuanyin who, in answering the prayer, may appear to the suppliant as a wise and gracious matron. To the young man seeking help and counsel in difficulties, the Pusa may come in visions as a wise and clever man; to the old the Pusa is generally old, and to the young he is often young. But whether male or female, whether old or young, Kuanyin is always handsome, gracious, and compassionate. His characteristic attribute is compassion, and he sees all, knows all, is present everywhere, and he is full of pity and goodness to all creatures.

As to the miracles which Kuanyin works on the Pusa's own island for the good of those who are pure in heart, and who have worshipped and prayed in faith and sincerity, they are very numerous. The abbot likes to point out a remarkable instance about which, as he says, you can satisfy yourself by observation and inquiry. In the course of your ramble you must have encountered a strange wild creature, a madman walking rapidly along the paths of the

island. His appearance and manner at once excite attention, but you need not fear him notwithstanding his wild gestures and loud shouting. He wears an old monk's robe which is long and dirty and ill-fitting; his head is unshaven, and his long matted hair hangs unkempt down his back. He walks all day to and fro, talking in a loud voice, sometimes shouting and gesticulating, but there is no meaning, no coherence in his utterances. Well, this man a few years ago was a monk, and a very pious, sincere, and highly respected brother. He was a man of good education, high-spirited, truthful, and of the strictest integrity. He had risen to be prior of the great monastery, and he had charge of all the secular affairs of the establishment, controlling expenditure and receiving and accounting for all revenues. He was very strict and accurate in all his transactions, keeping careful watch over all receipts and payments, and he was sometimes rather severe on brethren of lower morality. He had given offence to some of these on several occasions by requiring them to hand over to the common fund certain gifts which they had appropriated. Some of these offended brethren, wishing to wreak their petty malice on the prior, spread a rumour that he was unfaithful and dishonest. They then proceeded to accuse him to the abbot, with great show of proof, of embezzlement of the revenues of the monastery. In consequence of this an official inquiry was held, witnesses were examined, books and accounts gone into carefully,

and the result was that the prior was completely acquitted. But he had taken the false malicious charges and the public trial so much to heart, and had worried himself so much about them, that he lost his reason and became the madman you see him. Now our friend the abbot believes firmly, and will persuade you, that this poor forlorn lunatic is especially cared for and protected by the kind Kuanyin. If you do not believe, the abbot says, follow and watch the man for a time. You will see he goes about all day in all kinds of weather; he exposes his uncovered head to the fierce typhoon and the broiling sun; he sits on a rock for hours while the tempest is driving the cold rain into the marrow of his bones; often he lies out all night without covering on the hill-top or by the seaside; he never begs for food, and never asks for help or shelter from any one. Yet this poor, homeless, senseless creature never has a cold or fever, never suffers from fatigue or hunger or thirst; no wild beast molests him, no plague comes nigh him. Every one on the island treats him with respect, and all who meet him pity his sad misfortune. Surely it must be, as the pious abbot says and believes, that the man, otherwise helpless, is especially watched over and cared for by Kuanyin.

The abbot himself is kind and good to the poor madman, treating him with great compassion and marked reverence. But indeed he is courteous and amiable to all, lay or clerical, with whom he comes in

contact. He is jealous of his prerogatives and rules over his brethren, not from the love of power but through his zeal for the honour of Kuanyin. His monastery is a favourite resort for pilgrims of all kinds, many of whom come to worship Kuanyin and pay a visit of respect to the abbot. He is well known and greatly esteemed among the members of the Buddhist Church, and Kuanyin has no more cherished shrine, no more acceptable temple, than the Fa-yü-ssŭ.

Ah, here comes the purser to demand my fare. I must go for it. *Au revoir*, sir.

The Constant Husband

IT may be as you say, Mr. Foreigner, that our Chinese way of making marriages, the parents settling the matches without consulting the individuals to be wedded, is not conducive to domestic happiness. But I cannot agree with you when you go on to state that with this mode of procedure there cannot be any affection between husband and wife. There are indeed countless instances of marriages among our people in which there is absolutely no affection, no sympathy between husband and wife. Their union may be called a forced one, decided for them by others without due care and consideration. Yet in many cases persons thus wedded quietly agree to conform to circumstances, and lead peaceful if dull and emotionless lives. In other cases, however, the married couple find they have incompatible tempers and natural antipathies or invincible aversions, and in such cases the whole wedded life is an experience of sad, helpless misery. But, on the other hand, you should not leave out of sight the instances which occur here and there, and from time to time, in which a warm, true, and lasting affection springs up

between husband and wife, who never knew or saw each other until they were brought together for life. It may seem strange to you, but it is a fact, that often with us a young man and a young woman who meet for the first time as bride and bridegroom come to be very strongly attached. Such persons have been known to have for each other a love strong and pure and lasting to death, and at the moment of separation their prayer has been that they may be united again as husband and wife in a future life on earth.

I can tell you of one instance of this kind within my own experience. The man concerned is still living, and the circumstances are fresh in my memory. You are fond of long walks, and if you come with me as far as my parents' tombs, whither I am now going, I can tell you the story by the way thither and back. But, please, do not walk so fast. As you see I am an old man, and I have to live on rice and tea all my life. You are young, and eat beef and drink wine, so you have better and more vigorous animal spirits than I have. I must walk a little slowly, and perhaps you will think I tell my story a little slowly for your impetuous disposition.

As you know, I am in a large silk firm which has branches in many cities of China, and you may have visited our hong in Shanghai. It is the I-li hong in the Honam road, and it has large dealings with foreigners. My father was in this firm, and one of my sons is also in it now. It is about one of the

chief owners and managers of this firm that I am going to tell you.

The firm was first established a great many years ago at Soochow by an enterprising merchant named Lin. This man was succeeded by his son, and after him by his grandson, who extended the business very much, opening new branch houses in many of the large cities and towns. The grandson, as a matter of course, was married, and he lived to be the father of three sons. Of these, the eldest became a civil mandarin and rose to eminence, the second one went into a bank, and the third one, about whom I am going to tell you, was taken into the father's business. But the father was not living at the time this occurred, for he died while his youngest son was a little child. The name given to this little fellow was Pita, and he was the darling, the spoilt child of his mother. Her husband, when on his death-bed, had requested that Pita should in due time be taken into the firm, and he left all his children and all his household affairs in charge of his faithful wife.

This lady, Pita's mother, was a remarkable woman of great energy and clear intellect, strong and steady in affection, full of resources, and prompt and decided in taking action. To her husband throughout their wedded life she was a devoted attentive wife, very obedient and respectful to him, and always consulting and anticipating his wishes, but I do not think she ever really loved him. Her love was all for her children, especially the youngest, Pita. She was a

good-looking woman when I knew her, with beautiful bright eyes, small ears, a Kuanyin nose, and a small mouth, with thin lips and good teeth. She was dignified and reserved in manner, governing her household with little show of interference or exhibition of authority.

I remember when young Pita was taken into the firm. He was then a boy of about fifteen years of age, tall for his years, and rather shy and awkward at first. He was always from the first very polite and considerate, very attentive to his work, and very quick in learning the business. I think he had a certain amount of pride, inherited perhaps from his mother, and this kept him a good deal aloof from the other young men in the firm. He had a quiet reserved manner, and did not care to make many friends or associates. His own home had unfailing attractions for him, and he was devotedly fond of his mother.

When Pita was about sixteen years of age his mother began to look about for a suitable wife for him. The quest and selection gave her great anxiety, and took up much of her time and thought for many months. She was very hard to please, for she thought her son should have the most perfect maiden in the land. His bride should be not only of good birth and proper up-bringing, but she must be also tractable and sweet-tempered, and at the same time possessed of personal charms and some brightness of intellect. After two years of patient inquiry and

examination the mother at last found a young girl who seemed likely to make a good wife such as was desired for her son. The consent of the girl's parents was obtained, the betrothal was effected, and in due course of time the marriage was celebrated with great feasting and rejoicing.

The old lady's choice turned out to be a very good one. It was generally approved, and it was especially acceptable to the individuals most interested. The bride was one of the quaintest, nicest little women that ever lived. She seemed almost like a child, and indeed she was only sixteen years of age at the time of her marriage. She was a little under the ordinary stature of women, and very frail and slight in appearance, but she was full of life and activity. Her eyes were large and softly lustrous, beautiful in their sober stillness, but more beautiful when they rippled in the sunshine of her smiles. It was of course only in the company of her husband that I saw Pita's wife, and then her face was always happy and animated, and her eyes bright with intelligent interest. She was at times an excellent talker, and she had a tender soft way of speaking to her husband and mother-in-law. I never knew her personal name; her mother-in-law always called her and spoke of her as the "Little Child," and her husband always used at home the pet name he gave her—"Little Doll"—the name of a child's toy all joints and jerks.

Pita and his wife formed the best mated couple I

have ever known. It seemed indeed that their marriage was either the result of an arrangement brought about by Providence, or the renewal of a happy married life in a previous existence. From the first day of their wedded life they knew and understood each other as though they had lived for years together. Nor did the charm of their early married intercourse ever lose its virtue. They were always happy to be by themselves, never tired of each other's company, and all through their married life Pita spent his evenings at home. The first part of the night was generally passed in the mother's room, and when the old lady became sleepy or tired of their company she sent her son and his wife away to their own room. I often wondered what these two could have to talk about so long from day to day and from month to month, for Pita has told me that they often went on talking until the third or fourth watch of the night. As I have said, Pita's wife was a clever talker, and it was always a treat for me to hear her telling a household story, or listen to her giving serious matronly advice. Pita could enjoy a talk with her, though he could not converse with any one in the hong except on business matters, and then in a strictly business manner.

In the due course of events a succession of children appeared in Pita's family. First came a daughter, to whom the mother gave the significant name Chao-lai, or simply Chao. This name, which means *to call one,* was given in the hope that the girl would prove

to be the immediate forerunner of a boy. A son followed, and he was in turn succeeded by another girl. The name given by the mother to this daughter was Pao-ên—that is, Gratitude—the term being employed in the usual way to express thanks for past and expectation of future favours. This daughter was followed by another son, who was the last child of the family.

The mother-in-law took a warm interest in all her son's household affairs, and quietly controlled the domestic establishment, rather more, perhaps, than was quite agreeable to the wife. But the latter was passive and helpless in these matters, and she never rebelled and never complained. Nor, indeed, could she object very much, as she had little information and less experience, and the mother-in-law was actuated entirely by good and kind motives. Mrs. Pita, moreover, always found quite enough work in the house to keep her active and occupied all the day. Then the old lady was very fond of her grandchildren and very kind to them, and they loved her sincerely, though with a love not quite disinterested. Grandma had always unlimited supplies of sweets and "cash" at command whenever it was wanted. She petted and indulged all the children, but especially the elder son, in every possible way, and notwithstanding the mild remonstrances of their mother. Yet her indulgence was kept within bounds, and did not go so far as to spoil the children, or suffer them to be rude or naughty in her presence. Pita's mother

was also greatly attached to her daughter-in-law, whom she treated as a favourite child, never speaking to her harshly, and never treating her badly. The family was, indeed, a very happy and united one, and the days and months went by as pleasantly as could be desired, with no more interruption to the happiness than is caused by the petty ills of childhood, and the cares and anxieties of an ordinary family.

Time passed thus until Pita was twelve years married. His home continued as pleasant to him and as comfortable as ever. Business had prospered greatly, and he was now a rich and successful man on the way to make a large fortune. His elder son attended a small school in the neighbourhood, and his elder daughter, though only a young child, was already betrothed. The father was very happy in his family, and everything seemed to indicate that the happiness would be lasting. But the fates had decreed otherwise.

Ever since the birth of her last child Mrs. Pita had been liable to serious attacks of illness. Her constitution, never strong, had become enfeebled, and she was subject to fainting fits and pains about her heart. But in the presence of her husband and her mother-in-law she still kept up a brave appearance and never made complaint. In the company of her husband, indeed, she seemed to forget her pains and weakness, and to be as well and as happy as ever. He noticed, however, the new sad pallor of the face, the dimmed eye, and the unhealthy thinness, but he

thought these would all pass. And the mother-in-law, who had been quick to notice the change, had declared that all would soon be well again if the Little Child could be induced to take a sufficient amount of proper food, and would not worry herself about the children and other matters which she did not understand. Medicines were prescribed and administered, and delicacies provided, and everything that was possible was done to restore the mother to her usual health. But all was in vain, and she grew gradually weaker and worse. The end of the year was now approaching, and as we had to work out of hours, I had occasion to make several visits to Pita's house in the evening on matters connected with business. On the first of these visits I saw Mrs. Pita for the first time for several months, and the change in her appearance gave me a painful surprise. Her face now seemed to have acquired a tired, pained expression, very marked at times. She was still, however, as bright and chatty as before, and she would not admit that her constitution was impaired, or that she suffered much or severe pain.

It came to be about the full moon of the last month of the year, and I remember we were very much pressed with work in the hong. One day Pita had told his mother and his wife that he might not be home until late, as he had much business to attend to and despatch quickly, as the new year was fast approaching. He was in his office, drafting letters and giving instructions to our head clerk about sunset

on that day when a messenger came from his mother desiring him to come home at once. He gave me the still unanswered letters, with instructions as to the answers to be drafted and copied out for despatch. Then he set out as soon as he could for home, asking me to bring him the letters as soon as they were ready. On arrival at his house Pita found his wife in bed very ill and evidently suffering great pain. His mother had already called in the family doctor, who had prescribed certain medicines and a special diet. The medicines had already been compounded and administered, but they did not seem to be producing any good effect. Pita sat down on the large wooden box which stood close to the head of the bed, and taking the thin little right hand of his wife in his, he asked her about her pain and suffering. Little Doll still told her husband she was not very ill and not suffering much pain. She was only weak, she said, and very helpless, and it distressed her much to be giving him and his mother so much trouble. She hoped she would soon be up again and about her work as usual, for it was not right that granny should have all the care of the household and all the worry of the children. Her eyes, as they looked into those of her husband, had the same soft brightness they always showed in his presence, and her face had its wonted happy expression, but her voice was low and feeble, and it evidently pained her to talk. Pita did not trust himself to say much in reply, nor, indeed, could he have said much if he had tried. He told

me afterwards that while his wife was talking he experienced a sort of choking feeling, and that for the first time for many years great tears welled from his eyes and slipped down his cheeks. His left hand wandered to the pale sweet face beside him, and he stroked the cheeks and patted the forehead of his Little Doll. She raised her left hand and laid it on Pita's, holding his hand pressed to her brow. The eyes of husband and wife were dim with tears and their voices speechless with grief, but they felt for each other in this dying clasp that union of loving hearts which not even death can sever. They had remained motionless thus clasped together for some time, and there was deep silence in the room when Pita's mother gently entered. She asked the patient one or two questions, and then sat down on the bed and talked to her son about the symptoms of his wife's illness and the possible remedies.

It was late in the evening when I arrived at the house, and I was admitted into the inner room without delay. I brought a package of letters and various other business documents, some of which were for Pita to sign, while the others were for his inspection and instructions. While he was engaged with these papers I spoke a few words with his wife and his mother, but the latter soon drew me away from the sick-chamber into the reception-room to speak with me privately. She told me that the doctor had said in the course of the afternoon that he could not do anything more for the Little Child, that her fate was

on her, and that she must die in the course of a few days at the latest. The old lady was deeply affected, and it was only with a great effort that she could go on talking. But she was most anxious to tell me her fears about Pita, who, she said, would certainly be deeply distressed, and perhaps reduced to despair by the loss of his wife. He was very tender-hearted and constant, his mother added, and quite too fond of the Little Child; "the most dutiful and affectionate son a mother could have; he is as obedient and loving to me now as in the days of his childhood. But it is only natural and proper for him to love and cling to his wife. He will be inconsolable, and will probably bring on himself serious illness when she passes away." The old mother then asked me, as a good friend of the family, to help her in taking care of her son for a time, and also to act for him as far as I could in the funeral arrangements, and other matters which would have to be attended to on the death of his wife. I readily consented to comply with her requests, but expressed a hope that the life of the patient might still be prolonged for some time. When Pita had finished with the letters and other papers he gave them to me and I hastened back to the hong.

That night the little wife fell asleep with her hands in her husband's, as before, and it was only at the urgent request of his mother that Pita left the room to go to his own bed. The nurse was to sit up with the patient during the night as usual. But at day-

light next morning when his mother went to see the Little Child she found her son, she told me, already seated by the bed as before. After making some inquiries she went out and soon returned with some tea for her son and his wife, and a few cakes, which, with some difficulty, she persuaded Pita to eat. Then she left the room again and went to see after the preparations for breakfast for her son and the family.

When Pita and his wife were again left to themselves they began to talk of their children's ways and doings and all their prospects. But the conversation could not be kept up, for they both felt they were only glossing a present reality most sad and distressing. At last the wife told her husband that she felt herself growing daily weaker, and that she was afraid she would not be long in this world. She thanked him for having always been a kind, forbearing and forgiving husband, and lamented that she had been a useless wife to him and a stupid mother to his children. These, she said, she left with confidence to his wise care, merely asking him to let the boys have a good training and education. "The little girls," she added, "will miss me at first after I am gone, but granny will be good to them and have them brought up properly and well married. It is not so hard to bid them and our two little sons good-bye. But how can I part from you, my husband, most compassionate and long-suffering, my only and altogether beloved? You have made all my low poor life so fair and happy that the thought

of losing you by my departure saddens me more than the prospect of death itself. If I could have lived to repay you the smallest fraction of your kindness—but that may not be. And you, you will miss me for a time when I am gone, dear husband, but do not sorrow for me. When your time here is up you will come to me to be with me in that other world to which I am soon going. And if that cannot be, then I pray that I may return to life here and be again your consort in this world to serve you and love you better than I have done." These words were uttered slowly and at intervals, in a voice low and feeble but calm and steady, and faltering only from the patient's great weakness. And Pita could not make any answer. He could not tell his Little Doll, what he wanted to say, that he would love her always and cherish her memory and do all she asked. He could only press the cold little hand and stroke the pale wan cheeks while his eyes looked into hers, which were still beaming with trustful loving happiness, but beginning to be dimmed with the vision of the dark sorrow that was approaching.

The grandmother after a time returned, bringing a decoction reputed very efficacious for the Little Child. When this was administered, Pita was persuaded to leave the room and have his breakfast before going down to the hong. As he was about to leave the house he looked into his wife's room, and was comforted to find that Little Doll had fallen into a quiet sound sleep. This, his mother told him,

was a favourable symptom. But he was mindful to obtain from his mother a promise to summon him if any serious change for the worse occurred during the day.

The grandmother was very anxious about the Little Child this day, and spent all the time she could spare in the sick-room. In the afternoon her patient fell again into a sleep, and she took advantage of the opportunity to see her grandchildren have their dinners and to help in keeping them quiet. While they were eating the children were tolerably good, but as soon as dinner was over they began to be obstreperous. The housemaid, who had been in the family for many years, had much more influence over the children than their grandmother had, but all her authority and the coaxing and wheedling of the nurse were needed to keep them quiet and prevent them from going into their mother's room. Little voices of angry remonstrance and short cries of petulant impatience were uttered more than once. Some of these cries reached the ear of the patient, who had awaked from her sleep, and when the grandmother came back to the room the mother asked to have her children admitted. The grandmother unwillingly humoured the patient, and had the children brought in after impressing on them the necessity of being very good and quiet. On being admitted the elder son made a kotow and then stood by asking his mother whether she was better. The little girls came up close to their mother

and bent over her, putting their hands in hers and on her cheeks and brow, and asking her fond childish questions. The little son began to cry to be taken in his mother's arms and would not be appeased. She made an effort to lift him in her arms and comfort him, but she was too feeble and exhausted even to talk, and the children had to be taken away.

Soon after the children had gone their mother fell into another doze, and on awakening from this she asked if she could see her husband. The grandmother promptly said yes, and at once sent off a messenger to the hong. The patient seemed happy and went again into a calm deep sleep, and when grandmother came to tell her that her husband was coming she found that the sleep was that which knows no waking.

Pita arrived home in due time, and his mother met him at the door. She told him gently how sorry she was that she had not sent for him sooner as the Little Child had already passed away. The news gave Pita a dreadful shock, and he uttered a short exclamation of painful surprise, but he went on into the room and sat down as before by the head of the bed close to his wife. Taking her cold right hand in his, and laying his other hand gently on her forehead, he sat looking into the well-beloved little face which had now no more smile of happy welcome. He did not burst into tears nor did he pour out his grief in words, but he sat voiceless and almost motionless, only swaying to and fro a little. His

mother, always indulgent, left him alone with his wife for a little while, and then she came in again and softly drew him away from the room, telling him he must come and take some supper. In the meantime she had sent a messenger for me, and I joined the two soon after supper. It was then arranged that I should have the children transferred for two or three days to the care of an uncle and aunt, who were very fond of them, and who had no children of their own. We also settled with Pita that next day he should go down to the hong and attend to the orders and other urgent business matters awaiting his instructions, and that I should see after the necessary arrangements connected with the interment.

When I arrived at the house next morning, Pita had already gone down to business as arranged. But his mother told me that after I left on the previous night he had gone into the bedroom and sat down as before by the side of his dead wife. His mother humoured him, she said, for a time and then gently led him away and sent him to bed. But when she looked for him at daylight in the morning to give him his tea and cakes, she found him already seated by the bedside with one hand as before holding the Little Child's hand, and the other resting on her forehead. "But," the grandmother added, "my little son, you know, is always very good and obedient to me, and he rose at my request and came away with me from the room. I prevailed on him

to take some breakfast, for he did not wish to take any food, and then I reminded him that he had to go early to business."

When Pita came back in the evening he found to his surprise and disappointment his wife's coffin set out and ready for interment. The children had gone away to their aunt, and the house was exceedingly quiet, scarcely a sound to be heard. After a little conversation with his mother about her health, and power of bearing up under her cares and troubles, Pita went into his wife's room and sat down close to the coffin with his left arm over it and his hands clasped on the top. His mother, ever watchful over him, soon joined him and gradually led him into a talk over the funeral arrangements. She specially mentioned the invitations which she had sent to certain Buddhist monks to come and hold religious service, and she detailed the various expenses that had been incurred.

As it was necessary to have the interment over without delay, the funeral was arranged to take place on the third morning after the death. Pita and the eldest son followed the coffin on foot, and the elder daughter was borne in a sedan attended by her nurse. The ceremony was a very simple one and the procession very small, none but a few relatives and intimate friends attending.

On the morning after the burial, Pita went down to business as usual, and a stranger looking on him could not have divined that the man was heart-

broken with deep incurable sorrow. The clerks and assistants in the hong who scanned his face with kind interest could not see there the racking grief for "the snapped harp-string," nor find in it any indication of his trouble. His face was certainly sad and serious, but only a little more so than usual, and his eyes were clear and keen as of old. When he spoke, however, there was in his utterance a little tremor which was not there before, and he seemed to be half afraid and half unwilling to speak to any one. He read his correspondence, drafted his answers, examined and passed accounts, gave instructions, and generally attended to all the details of business with his wonted promptness, sharpness, and accuracy. He left the hong in the afternoon earlier than usual to return home, all thought. But he did not go home. When the time came for him to arrive at his house, and he did not turn up nor send a message, his mother by the quickness of her loving sympathy guessed at once whither her son had gone, and sent a servant for him to his wife's grave. There he was found in the cold gloaming recumbent by the grave, with one arm over it and his hands clasped together. The servant delivered the message from Pita's mother to him, and he rose at once, and went with the servant to his lonely, desolate home.

The death of her daughter-in-law gave Pita's mother new and serious cares and responsibilities, and for several years she had a busy and anxious life. Her grandchildren occupied much of her time

and care, and she was now more wise and prudent, but not less kind, in her treatment of them. She also took great interest in forwarding the arrangements for the marriage of the elder daughter, which had been begun by the Little Child. Indeed, it was chiefly because this marriage was her daughter-in-law's choice that the grandmother wished to see it take place. The intended bridegroom was not the husband she would have selected for her granddaughter, but she wanted to carry out the desire of her daughter-in-law and please her son.

Then her unfailing loving care for him, her own "little son," and her perfect devotion to his welfare often kept her thinking and planning for him half the day and night. Among the schemes in her mind for his comfort and happiness was one to provide him with a new wife. She had serious doubts, however, as to the possibility of this scheme succeeding in view of the unchanged state of her son's mind with reference to his deceased wife. After some delay and consideration, when it was about three years from the death of the wife, the mother in her perplexity asked me to sound her son at a convenient opportunity on the subject of the proposed new marriage.

I was anxious to comply with the old lady's request as soon as a suitable occasion presented. So one day as Pita and I were walking together I suggested to him the idea of getting another wife, hinting that his mother was desirous to see him

wedded again and that she would be glad to find a wife for him. He soon gave me to understand that he was determined not to marry again and that he did not like to have the subject mentioned. He also told me that he would at once find out from his mother whether she was doing anything in the matter, and if he found she had taken any steps he would urge her to stop further proceedings. On the evening of that day he was sitting as usual with his mother, talking with her about the children and household affairs. Then he suddenly asked her whether it was true that she was seeking for a new wife for him. "Yes," said his mother with some hesitation; "I have been distressed to see you living the lonely sorrowful life you lead, and to watch your children growing up without any one to care for them and train them properly. You know I am fast becoming old and feeble, and I cannot expect to be with you much longer. So I have thought it was perhaps my duty to look out for a good wife for you, to cheer and comfort you and to take care of your children."

"My beloved, tender-hearted mother," Pita answered, "I kotow to you and thank you sincerely for your constant kindness, but I implore you not to think of bringing another wife into our house. Long ago, mother, you gave me one good little wife, the mother of my children; she is and always will be my wife, and one husband one wife is the proper thing. You are a mother to my children now, and I

will nurse and serve you all my life. I am content, so do not make me take a new wife instead of my Little Doll. You have always indulged your little son, and now grant him this his latest request."

"Enough, enough, my little child," the mother replied; "I am tired now and must go to bed. You stir deep memories, my child, of my own past life. The female wild swan bereft of her mate does not seek a new one, but lives on as I have done in faithful widowhood, and why may not the male bird also be true to his lost mate—yes, true to death? It will be as you wish, and no new wife will be forced on you by me. Now go to bed and sleep well."

The years went by and the children were growing up. Grandmother had spoiled the elder of the boys, and he was disposed to be idle and mischievous, so troublesome that the master of the higher school to which he had been transferred did not wish to keep him. But the other children grew up good and dutiful, healthy and happy. Little Pao-ên was slight and frail, like her mother in features, form, and ways, and she was a special favourite of her father. She kept the memory of his wife fresh and vivid to him, though indeed nothing was needed to remind him of his wife. Little Doll was never forgotten, never put out of sight or mind by any usurping form or object. Every year when the time drew near at which she passed away he became restless and gloomy, and at length went off from home on some

pretext, and remained away until after the anniversary of her death. He still continued also to pay frequent visits to his wife's grave, and he never failed to go there on the festivals and holidays. When at her grave he seemed to be again at home with his Little Doll. As he reclined there with his hands clasped on it, he told his wife all the news about himself, the family, and the business, and talked to her exactly as if he saw her beside him watching and listening to him. All this I learned for myself, and by a mere accident. Our family burying-place, as you can see, is about a mile and a half farther in the hills than that of Pita's family. One afternoon in spring, about six years after the death of Mrs. Pita, I was returning from my ancestors' tombs, where I had been performing the customary annual services. The hills diminish in size as they approach the plain, you observe, and the pathway winds through and round them, following for a considerable distance the course of a noisy violent stream. On a pine-covered knoll, the last offshoot of the hills, round which the stream flows with quieter vehemence, keeping it respectfully on its right, is the burying-place of Pita's family. You can see the clump of trees and the shining stream from the height which we are approaching. I had reached this spot on my way home when I was surprised to hear the stillness of the evening broken by a human voice. Listening for a moment, I recognised the voice as that of Pita, who seemed to be talking to some one in his usual

quiet manner. Not wishing to disturb him, and at the same time desiring to have him join me for the rest of the way home, I stepped aside behind a tree and waited. There was no one with Pita, and as I stood there I heard him saying:

"And old granny has failed a little since we last met; she cannot go about the house much now. She has settled the marriage you wanted, Little Doll, between Chaolai and the eldest son of our partner; there is to be no more delay and the marriage is to come off very soon. Ah-Chang (the eldest son) is as bad as ever; he is the cause of much uneasiness to granny and me, and no teacher can do anything with him; but he is clever, and we both hope he will soon change to be steady and wise. Little Pao-ên is not growing much, she is liker you every day, and sometimes I can hardly distinguish which is Little Doll. As to Little Pup (the younger son) he is quite well again; he has gone back to school and the master tells me he is making good progress. Granny seems to be even fonder of him than before, and she grudges him all day to the schoolmaster. I have been to worship at my father's tomb, and it is growing late, you see, so I must be going home, otherwise granny will be sending old Deafy for me. Good-bye."

As he was moving, I joined Pita and we walked home together. When we were on the way I told him I had heard him talking to some one, and asked him whether it was to his dead wife he had been

speaking. "Yes," he replied; "to my wife." He then went on to relate how he had made it his practice to go to her tomb and tell her all his news, all his joys and troubles. He said he never thought of her as dead, but always as still living and present with him.

After a few more years the grandmother failed rapidly, and at length became an invalid confined to her room. When alone there she called up the memories of her early life, her happy marriage, the births of her children, and her one great sorrow in the loss of her husband But when her "little son" was sitting beside her in the evening she liked to talk of his young life, to tell him stories of his boyish frolics and waywardness. She hoped, however, she said, that his sons would in due time become steady and serious and make as good men as their father. Then she would tell of her long anxious solicitude when seeking out a wife for him, and how the Little Child was the best and most suitable she could find. The Child was not good enough and she was not clever or strong, still she had made a dutiful, obedient wife and daughter, and had done her best for her husband and all the family, She might have come to make a very good wife and mother if she had not died so early. The old lady's memory was good and her mental powers remained active. Her affectionate interest in her son and family also never failed during her long illness. At length she made a peaceful, happy departure, with the "little

son's" face before her eyes and the ring of the grandchildren's voices in her ears. She was laid with all ceremonies of honour and reverence beside the husband from whom she had been kept apart so many years.

After his mother's death and burial Pita went to relate all the circumstances to his wife, and he continued to visit her grave as before. Indeed, he went there more frequently, I think, for he liked to keep his parents' tomb in decent condition and to offer them pious worship whenever duty or affection impelled him. But it was always at his wife's tomb that he lingered lovingly, and there he still held converse which cheered and revived him.

His elder daughter was duly married to the man of all the parents' choice, and the marriage was a very happy one. The elder son was taken into the firm as an assistant, and he soon became a steady, intelligent, and industrious man of business. This reformation pleased his father very much, and he soon retired from the active management of the business in favour of his son. The latter was, of course, in due time provided with a wife and he has already a young family. Pita's wife had hoped that their second boy would study and become a civil mandarin, and the boy began well. He succeeded at the examination for the first Degree, and soon after he was married to the daughter of a Hanlin graduate; but he did not like the literary drill, and he had neither ambition nor a love of money,

so he gradually developed into a "book-string." The second daughter, who grew up so like her mother, has persisted in her refusal to be married, and she continues to live with her father, whom she tends and serves with perfect affection and faithfulness, making his old age restful and contented,

Last New Year's time it was forty years since Pita lost his dear little wife; and her memory, or rather her presence, is as fresh and lovely to him now as it was when she was taken from him. She is as fair and winning to him to-day as she was more than fifty years ago when they were joined in marriage. If you go to his home and visit the inner chambers of the house you will find the wife's bedroom much as it was when she was living and spent happy hours in it with her husband. Her wardrobe is still there in its original place against the north wall, and on it is the exquisite little crystal image of Kuanyin which the bride's mother gave her on her marriage. Before the image is the little vase with a flower of the season always fresh and fragrant. The flower is always placed in the vase by Pita, for since Little Doll's death no other hands than his have ever changed the bouquet or touched the image sacred to him by a double sacredness. No worship is ever paid to the image nor is any incense burnt before it, but the all-pitying deity is reminded of the absent votary by her ever-present symbol in the flowers she once loved, the jasmine, the tuberose, the narcissus, and the chrysanthemum.

Although Pita is now an old man, frail and feeble, he still goes, as he has gone for forty years, to the tomb of his dear Little Doll, and there he still talks with her as in the days of long, long ago. Indeed, it is only of their early lives, of the woes and joys of fifty years ago, that he talks now. His young wife and their little children, and his dear kind mother who sympathised with him in all things, are always present to him. About them he thinks and dreams, of them he talks, and they are the only realities of his present life.

His youngest daughter, Pao-ên, who is sometimes attended by her aged nurse, now generally goes with her father to the burying-place. She helps him to offer his worship to his parents, then sees him seated at her mother's tomb, and goes aside to wait until he is ready or until it is time for them to return, This daughter, as I have told you, grew up very like her mother in manner and appearance. Sometimes, as she sits beside her old father when he is musing, he gazes into her face for a little, then he pats her hand or strokes her forehead, and, looking away, calls her Little Doll, seeming for a moment to mix up the living with the dead. Pita cannot have many more years to live, but I am sure he will continue to visit his wife's grave as long as health and strength permit. He talks already of the time being near when he will be able to rejoin Little Doll in another world, and sometimes he seems to be impatient at the delay which keeps him away from the happiness

of being with her again. I am convinced that when he passes away his death will be to him only a return home after a short absence from his wife, to whom he has been a Constant Husband beyond the largest requirement of the term.

I fear the story of my old friend's life has wearied you more than the walk. Well, they are both finished now. Here we part; your way is to the right. Walk slowly. *Au revoir.*

The True Maiden

COME, elder brother, and let us sit outside the guest-room of the temple, here on the verandah. How lovely the moonlight lies on these rounded hills and on the green rice-fields below, and how it silvers into clear distinctness the little creeks and the great river far beyond. The air, too, is soft and mild, and a solemn stillness reigns as though the neighbourhood of the temple were, as the monks profess to believe is the case, haunted by gods and other invisible immortals. The deep pervading silence is broken only by the ceaseless murmur of the brooklet below the precipice over there, and the casual weird *lum-lum* of the little owl who cannot sleep. It is, indeed, as you say, an evening to suit romance and the airy fancies of a poet, an evening fit for tales of fairies and the sad stories of true love.

Oh, say not that we Chinese have none of the last. Have you read in vain our old literature and our modern romances, and have you learned in your sojourn in the land so little of our inner life? Is there not plenty of romantic attachment between

man and woman in our ancient histories and historical romances? But indeed we need not go back to the poems of the far-off old times, the dry pages of ancient history, and the tales written by feigners of facts to find instances of true love in mistress and wife. Have you not heard of her in our own times, the daughter of a high mandarin, who would not give up the name of her unhappy lover? Her parents tried cruel beating and torturing, and when these expedients failed they proceeded to keep her in close confinement and starve her slowly to death in order to force from her the name of her lover. She became mad, and at last died in her dark prison-room; but neither in the agonies of bodily pain, nor even in the wild ravings of her madness, did she ever reveal his name. So strong was the charm of love in the breast of a feeble maiden.

Yes, I have known in my own experience of more than one case of genuine affection such as you describe, and I can tell you of them. Only a day's journey from the home of the true maiden of whom I have told you is the scene of another tragedy of love. This one is well-known to me in all its particulars, and as it is of an unusual character, you may be interested to hear the story. I can tell it gradually, and at intervals in the evenings while we enjoy this charming moonlight and the mild genial air of the mountain. Yes, I can begin at once as the night is still young. Thank you, another glass of wine. Pray do not let me weary you, and let me

know when you feel sleepy. Now, light another cigar, and hear my tale.

There is a well-known island, about a day's sailing from the coast of China, with one little harbour on its west side. The entrance from the sea into this harbour is a narrow dangerous passage between great steep rocks. The rocks on the south side are the northern end of a headland, a long flat-topped rocky eminence which rises sheer out of the ocean to a height of above 100 feet. All along the foot of this headland in the sea lie great boulders, huge fragments of rock, strewn about and heaped up in grand confusion. On these the league-long rollers of mild weather break unceasingly with a gentle vehemence which sends the water up in showers of snowy spray with a long swish-swash sound. In rough stormy weather, and when the ocean is wild and fierce, its great billows dash with mad rage against the rocks, making a terrific roar, and flinging columns of spray up over the top of the headland. About halfway along the top on the seaward side is a slight hollow or depression, from which a narrow winding goat-track leads down to the rocks at the foot.

Passing in from the sea through the narrow entrance you come into a lagoon, which at the seaward side from north to south is narrow, but stretches several miles away to the east, expanding in bays and shallows. On the north side of this lagoon, near the entrance, is the small anchorage for

ships. Beyond that are the oyster-beds in which small heaps of limestones are used for the propagation of summer oysters, and beyond these is a large expanse of shallow water. To the west and south-west of the lagoon a long low elevation, overgrown with banyans and other trees, separates it from the sea, into which the elevation descends in a gently sloping bank of sand. From the lagoon on the north side several tidal creeks penetrate short distances into the country, and are used for the transport of inward and outward merchandise.

The channel of the first of these creeks begins near the oyster-beds. Then to your right, as you float up it with the tide, is a basin of quiet shallow water, and to your left a marshy stretch with high ground covered with trees beyond. Passing on, you glide along the edge of a mangrove swamp on your right, and then past the salt beds. In the water, and on the little dots of land standing out from the water, you see numerous cranes and herons, stalking shrimps and snails, or standing on one leg meditating a new departure. This creek terminates inland at a little village almost hidden among great trees. Close to the head of the creek is a whitewashed house, better in appearance and more substantial than the common houses of the district. At the time of the events related in this narrative, the occupants of the house were a man named Kim, his wife, and their only child, a young daughter.

A few years ago I held an appointment as district

magistrate for that small but troublesome district, and I resided at the town which lies three or four miles north-east from the head of the creek. It was from the chief permanent secretary of my establishment, a native of the place, that I received the particulars here set forth.

The Mr. Kim whom I have mentioned was a shopkeeper and farmer, and he was also a banker and agent for the barges which plied between the harbour and the village. He was a man kind-hearted and slow to anger, disposed to be lazy and indifferent, a good neighbour and fair and generous in all his transactions. A part of his house served as office and as a shop, in which were sold all the miscellaneous articles of Chinese household requirement. Behind the house was an enclosed space in which the two water-buffaloes for farming purposes and the pigs were quartered. The pigs, indeed, only lodged there at night, and looked in for a drink or a watery meal during the day. They were generally to be seen wandering about at large and foraging for themselves. Several semi-independent fowl had the freedom of the house, and were always to be seen on the alert, watching that nothing eatable was allowed to perish in vain so far as they were concerned. The only other animal on the establishment was a mongrel cur, lean with the gnawings of unfulfilled desires, which wandered about in quest of food by day and guarded the premises by night.

Mr. Kim attended chiefly to the farm and the

barges, leaving the shop and all household matters as far as possible to the care of his wife. Mrs. Kim was a shrewd clever woman, careful and industrious, and an excellent manager. In childhood she had been handsome, and she still retained her good looks, but her face had a hard and sometimes a rather cruel expression. The women of the village did not like her much, and some of them had breathed on her name and whispered tales of stolen love. Mrs. Kim did not vex herself much with the village gossip, but she was distressed and ashamed to be the mother of only one child, and that a daughter. Being wise in her ways, when she saw that this daughter was not likely to be followed by a son, she resolved to bring up the girl as much as possible after the manner of a boy. So the little child had a teacher who taught her to read and write and keep accounts, and she was early trained in all the management of the shop and house. Thus the daughter, whose name was Moli, received a training and lived a life very different from those of the girls in the country generally. Yet she was a very modest gentle girl, with a peculiar expression of face which once seen was not readily forgotten. She was slight and small, and you would scarcely call her beautiful. She had a small mouth with pretty lips and good teeth; her eyes were very dark, and they had a solemn tender look which had a quiet fascination. When talking with one she had often a rather coquettish way of half turning from you and half

peeping at you. The little smile which dimpled her cheek and lit up her eyes and charmed the beholder came all too rarely, and she seemed to take life with all its daily round of petty cares and troubles rather seriously for a girl of sixteen. Her dress, which was plain and simple, was always clean and tidy, and the only ornaments she wore, at least in daily life, were a pair of small jade ear-rings, a bracelet of scented wood, and a China rose or other flower in her hair over her right ear.

It is of this little maid and her love that I am to tell you, and my story begins with her when she was in her seventeenth year. Some time previously, before she had reached her fifteenth year, Mrs. Kim had been looking about for an eligible young man who might be obtained as a husband for her child. She had now at length found one whom she regarded as suitable from every point of view, and she had persuaded Mr. Kim that the man of her choice was the best one to secure. His parents were known to the Kims by sight and repute, and inquiries had not elicited anything against his or their character. So Mr. and Mrs. Kim agreed that the latter should make known to the parents of the young man the desire of herself and her husband for a marriage to be arranged between the son of the former and the daughter of the latter.

The young man who had become, unknown to himself, thus personally acceptable to Mrs. Kim as a future son-in-law, was surnamed Ong. But he

was generally known as Little Ong, his father being known as Great or Old Ong. The latter was one of the substantial farmers of the district and lived beyond the village about two miles from Kim's house. Little Ong was the youngest child and only son of his parents, and so he was somewhat spoiled and indulged at home. He was a handsome boy with soft dark eyes, and a pleasant if not very intelligent expression of countenance. He was bright and lively at times, and rather fond of roving about for pleasure and generally taking all the enjoyment he could out of life. One of his favourite idle haunts was the Creek Head, and he liked to sit there under one of the leafy banyans and watch the barges coming and going, and loading and discharging. He was known to everybody and knew all who frequented the place, and he took a lively interest in the little knots of men waiting on business or lounging for idleness.

On his visits to Creek Head Little Ong had often seen young Miss Kim, and, like the other young men, he had been attracted by her appearance. Beginning with a boyish fancy he had come to have a genuine strong love for the little maiden, and his love had grown up in him insensibly and spontaneously. As he did not think it in accordance with propriety for him to make his love for Moli known to her, and to woo her love in return, the girl knew nothing of his affection for her, and still regarded him as one of her ordinary neighbours and

acquaintances by sight. It was thus very good news for Little Ong when he learned from his mother that the parents of Moli had expressed their desire to have him as their son-in-law, and had asked his parents to consider the matter favourably. His own father and mother, he found, were not disposed to make objections to the marriage, and he began to have a happy hope that in the course of time, and before very long, Miss Kim would be his beloved wife.

But Little Ong's hopes were crossed by a suitor who told his love and won his suit, and it fell in this wise. On one of the barges which plied between Creek Head and the harbour, was a young boatman named Tan Ahjit. His father was the owner, or part owner, of four of the barges, and had also a small farm. The father, an uncle, two brothers of Ahjit with him, and three cousins formed the crews and managed all the affairs of the barges. Ahjit was about seventeen years old, a tall, thin, wiry youth, at the time this history begins. He was rather a dull-looking fellow, very quiet and gentle, and very strong and healthy. He was thoroughly well-conducted, but neither clever nor handsome, and exposure to a tropical sun for several hours a day had darkened his complexion very much. Moreover, the constant hard work in the open air had given his features a rather coarse and rough expression. But he was a pleasant mate, generally cheerful and sociable, though sometimes he would go apart and

sit alone lost in thought or daydreams, of which no one ever heard.

Now Ahjit had often to go on business connected with the barges to Kim's shop, and there he met and talked with Miss Moli. At first, and for some time, their intercourse was confined strictly to matters of business, such as the payment of money, the filling up and signing of cargo-bills, receipts, and certificates. But "love quickly takes hold of the gentle heart," and Ahjit gradually came to feel that he liked to see Moli and hear her talk, and that he often felt a desire to go to the house when there was no business to take him thither. The coy maiden was always staid and serious in her conversation with Ahjit, and she pretended to wonder why he should come to the shop when he had no business to put through. I say "pretended," for she must have noticed that Ahjit liked to tarry talking with her, and that he had a regard for her and took an interest in her beyond what any of her other acquaintances had. As yet, however, there was no mention of love, and no hint from Ahjit to indicate that he was in love.

On her side Moli had begun to wish for Ahjit's visits, to enjoy his talk and presence, and to find the shop dull and lonely after he had gone. But for a long time she did not think of him as actually in love with her and as her possible future husband, nor did she feel herself seriously attached and devoted to him. Love for Moli, however, grew to

be the absorbing passion of Ahjit's life and he made up his mind to tell his love and try his fortune. Nor did he wait long to carry out his resolve, and chance gave him an excellent opportunity. One afternoon Kim's pigs had strayed farther than usual and would not come when called, so Moli had gone off to find them and drive them home. She was returning with them in the evening and was approaching the hedge of tall bamboos which formed the enclosing fence of the farmyard when she saw Ahjit. He was standing outside the hedge on the eastern side, the mellow light of the setting sun shining through the hedge. The light revealed on Ahjit's face, so Moli thought, an earnest but troubled expression such as she had never seen on it before. He came up to meet her and asked her to stop and let him speak to her for a moment. She stopped and waited in silence, with downcast eyes, to hear what he had to say. It was a plain little tale he had to tell, with no fine words, but in broken sentences of homely speech, of how he had come to love her and to find that he could not live without her. So he wanted her now to love him and to promise that she would become his wife when the necessary consent of the parents of both was obtained. Moli, with eyes on the ground, in broken phrases half audible and fluttering, made reply that he had taken her by surprise and that she must consult her mother. "You know," she said to him, "it is not right for you to talk to

me in this way, and it is wrong for me to answer you."

"But only tell me," Ahjit pleaded, "that you will try to love me, and that you are willing to be my wife; that is all I ask now. I will love you and you only all my life."

"I promise," said Moli; "but there is mother calling me. I must go in. If you will keep your word and be faithful to me I promise to love you and that I will never become the wife of any other man. Good-night."

To Ahjit as he walked home from this interview the air was light and fragrant, the mated birds from the trees twittered happy good-nights, the world had a new charm, and all the prospects of life seemed full of hope and brightness. When he reached home it was almost dark, and he was glad to find his mother alone sitting outside the cottage waiting for him and his father. Ahjit was very much attached to his mother, to whom he still remained a dutiful trusting child, and she loved him with all the tender self-slaying love of a mother. "I have something to tell you, mamma, and something to ask of you," he said as he sat down on his heels in front of her. He then proceeded to tell his mother of the love which had grown up in him for Moli, and how he had told his love to the girl that afternoon, and of the promise which he had obtained from her in return. He then asked his mother to overlook the irregularity of his proceedings and to help him to get Moli for

wife. His mother listened to her son's story with mingled surprise and sorrow, but she readily consented to forward his suit as she saw it concerned his future happiness. She advised her son, however, not to hurry matters for the present. He and the girl, she reminded him, were very young and they could afford to wait for a year or two; besides it was not according to the rules of propriety for him to choose and woo his wife as he had done. He should now refrain from visiting Miss Kim and talking with her on the subject of their love and mutual engagement; the marriage must be brought about and settled by the parents of both. "But there is daddy round the corner and I must get your suppers."

When Moli met her mother in the evening shortly after the interview with Ahjit, the mother observed a change in the appearance and manner of her daughter. In reply to her mother's questions Moli related all the circumstances of the interview, telling specially of the promise she had given Ahjit. Her mother, who was taken by surprise, was much disgusted and exceedingly disappointed. She told Moli so and rebuked her for her conduct in talking with a young man in secret, and in receiving from him and giving to him pledges of love. She also told Moli of the match which was being made for her in the regular proper manner with a young man far superior to the wretched barge-boy. Mrs. Kim finished by telling her daughter in clear emphatic terms of authority that she must give up the barge-boy and consent to

be wedded to the young man to whom she was soon to be formally betrothed. Moli was confused, perplexed with grief and pain when she heard all her mother had to say. She could not speak for some time, and falling on her mother's breast she burst into tears. Her mother said no more that night on the painful subject and allowed her child to sob herself to rest on her bosom.

The next morning after the interview with Moli Ahjit went in his barge as usual to the Port, and did not return to Creek Head for several days. When he came back he had occasion to go to Kim's shop on business, and so there was an opportunity for him to see and talk with Moli. When they were alone the poor girl, who had been longing to see her lover, told him with sad despair all her mother had said about their plighted loves and the proposed marriage. She then advised her lover to give her up and ask his mother to find him a more suitable wife among the maidens of the village. But Ahjit shook his head in deprecation and merely told again the story of his deep true love, dear to the ears and heart of Moli, and said in his quiet strong way that he could not change, that he would never seek for marriage with any other girl and never marry any other. Moreover, his mother, he said, was on his side and was going to persuade the Kims to allow their marriage. He then asked Moli if she was sure of her own heart, or if she wanted to be free from her promise and obey her mother's commands. The

tears were falling slowly and unheeded from her eyes, her bosom was heaving with deep suppressed agitation, and her voice was faint and broken as she told her lover once more that he had all her love, that she could not marry another, and that she would be true to him for ever.

Ahjit told his mother all he had heard from Moli about the proposed betrothal by her parents, and prayed his mother to go soon to Mrs. Kim and persuade her to let him have her daughter in marriage. Mrs. Tan readily agreed, and after her son had gone down again to the Port she determined to visit Mrs. Kim and have a talk with her over the love affairs of their two children. So when a lucky day had been chosen she hired a small sedan-chair with two of the eldest and most feeble opium-smoking bearers to be found. Having adorned herself with all her visiting finery, and provided herself with a small basket of the indispensable betel-nut, she set out on the short journey to Creek Head. Arrived there, she was courteously received by Mrs. Kim, who took her into the back room, and there the two mothers had a long chat over the loves of their children and their own duties in the circumstances.

Soon after Ahjit returned again from the Port, his mother told him that she had seen Mrs. Kim, who told her that there were serious obstacles to the proposed marriage between him and her daughter. One of the difficulties in the way of the marriage was that Ahjit was poor and of low condition, and

that he was not likely to make much money or rise to any position by his present occupation. Another obstacle was that Little Ong had already fallen in love with Miss Kim, and the parents of both had agreed that these two should be united in marriage. After thinking over the matter for two or three days, and then talking it over with his father on the barge, Ahjit determined to make serious efforts to have the obstacles to his marriage removed. To remedy his poor estate he resolved, with his father's consent and approval, but much against his mother's wishes, to cross the ocean to foreign lands and try his fortune in business or labour, like many other young men whom he had known. As for Little Ong he would go and see him, and try to persuade him to give up his suit on the plea that Moli was already betrothed by her own voluntary act. He knew Ong, with whom he was on terms of intimate friendship, to be of generous heart, and he thought he could not be deep in love and so might be easily persuaded. But to his surprise Ahjit found it impossible to induce Ong to give up his hoped-for and much loved bride. As a compromise due to friendship and consideration for Moli, Mr. Ong consented to abstain from pressing his suit and carrying out the betrothal made by their parents during the year Ahjit proposed to be away. This arrangement, together with the particulars of his intended emigration and his future prospects, Ahjit from time to time communicated to Moli. The news of her lover's resolve to go far away and

remain absent for a long time made her heart sink and blotted all joy out of her future life, and she heard the details of his arrangements with deep and undisguised distress.

A Chinese emigrant does not need much time to get his outfit together, pack his cases, bid adieus, and ship his effects. A coarse mat and a box-pillow, with sometimes a change of clothes and a red blanket, make up all his baggage. Ahjit had a rather better outfit, all provided and packed up by his mother, with much weeping and sad forlorn talking to herself. When the day of his departure came, he had his few articles of baggage put on board the barge early. It was the 14th day of the 8th month, and Ahjit had left his home after kotowing adieu to his broken-hearted mother, who was convinced that she was never to see her darling child again. Before the barge began her voyage, Ahjit had occasion to go into Kim's shop on business, but Moli was not there. He wanted to see her, so when he had finished his business he went to seek her in the wild piece of land beyond the homestead. He found her sitting on a small grassy mound under the trees absorbed in sad meditation and forgetful of all her duties. On seeing Ahjit, the sadness of her eyes and face passed away for a little under the smile of joy at meeting him again. There was not much time for them to talk over hopes and prospects, and to exchange farewells, nor did they need much time, for they had little to say, being few

of words and each knowing the other's heart, and each believing in the other with perfect faith. Ahjit, full of hope and confident of the future, made solemn promise to Moli that he would come back at the end of twelve or at the most eighteen months; he would have made by that time, he said, enough money to enable them to be married and begin life comfortably. In the meantime he would send word of how he was getting on by every one whom he found returning to this neighbourhood. He begged Moli to keep up heart and to trust him in spite of appearances, and notwithstanding all that would be said to raise distrust. The broken-hearted maiden could only sob out little fragments of sentences to tell her lover she would always love and trust him, to beg him to keep her in mind among foreign scenes and peoples, and, above all, to be sure and come back when the year would be up. A little later the barge, with Ahjit on board, put off and went slowly on her sad way. Near the bank but half hidden by a tree Moli stood to watch the barge pass. The eyes of Ahjit turned naturally in that direction, and when they met her tearful hopeless look, the souls of the lovers took a silent, lasting farewell. The barge turned a bend of the creek and was borne out of sight of Moli, and she went home feeling that her sun of life had set. Would he ever rise again?

For some time after Ahjit's departure, Mrs. Kim did not speak much to her daughter about the

marriage already arranged between her and Little Ong. But when half a year was gone, and there was little news of the emigrant lover, the proposed marriage again came up for discussion. The mother now began to insist on her daughter giving up all thought of becoming the wife of Ahjit. The fellow, she urged, had doubtless already forgotten Moli in the company of a wife easily obtained in the foreign country. It was uncertain whether he would ever come back, and if he did come, he would not be content to stay at home, but would be a roving good-for-nothing like the emigrants generally. Her daughter must remember that she was unfortunately the only child of her parents, and that while it was their duty to provide a proper husband for her, it was her duty to obey the wishes of her parents in all matters, especially in the important business of marriage. Her father, the mother repeated over and over again, would never forgive his daughter if she married against his will, and refused to carry out the arrangements made by her parents and those of Mr. Ong.

In reply to all her mother's threats and commands Moli merely urged with quiet insistence that her heart was fixed, her promise given, and that she must wait for the return of her betrothed. She thanked her mother for her great kindness in seeking out a good husband for her, and lamented that her fate had been settled before her mother's choice was made. Her mother, she said, might now force

her to become the wife of Mr. Ong in name, but she could never serve him as a true wife: she was bound by her promise to Ahjit, and she was his wife, and could never be rightly wedded to another.

Acting on the advice of Mrs. Kim and his own mother, Little Ong now went to see and plead his cause with the maid to whom he was affianced by their parents. Moli heard him patiently as he told the story of his love, which was not, he explained, a fancy of a day nor the bidding of his mother, but an affection which grew up of itself and was true and the love of a life. Then Moli told him of how she had grown up to love Ahjit who loved her first, and how they had vowed to be true to each other for life. So it was impossible for her to become Mr. Ong's wife and serve him with her whole heart as became a good and faithful wife. Would he not ask his mother to seek him from some family of good name a comely well-mannered maiden who would be a helpmeet for him and give him all the joys and comforts of a happy home? Surely it were better to do that than to be bound in name to her who was bound in fact to the man who alone was or could be her true husband. She begged Little Ong with all earnestness not to talk to her again of his love, but to look on her as only a friend or acquaintance of everyday life, and to be still the good kind friend of the absent one who alone could be her lover and husband. The quiet charm of Moli's voice and ways, enhanced now by the fixed sadness of her face,

swayed the heart of the true but luckless lover. He yielded to her request that he should see her only as an occasional friend or acquaintance, and he promised not to speak to her again of his love and the marriage at least until the end of the year from Ahjit's departure.

"The months of one's years wait for no one," says a Chinese poem, and the months of Ahjit's year went by until the full year was gone. Yet the wandering lover did not return, nor was there any news of him save what one or two letters from neighbours had brought. According to the last letter, at the time of writing he was well and had good wages at a great tin mine. Mrs. Kim, now that the year of grace had passed, resumed the subject of the marriage with Little Ong in conversations with her daughter. As the engagement to Ahjit was an irregular and improper thing, she said to Moli, it should at once be taken to be at an end. Moreover, this so-called lover and betrothed had not kept his word, failing to return at the end of the year and not even sending a letter of explanation or giving any news about himself. So her daughter must make up her mind soon to become the wife of the man to whom she was properly and legally betrothed. She had been humoured in her wayward fancies long enough, and she must now act in a sensible manner.

Little Ong also, some time after the end of the year's limit, went to Kim's house to see Miss Kim and learn his fate from her. The wretched maiden

was sad beset, and knew not how to answer mother and lover. "Why," she moaned to herself, "why does not Ahjit come? or, if he cannot come, why does he not write or send a message? He must surely be very ill or far away in some outlandish place with which there is little communication." She prayed her mother not to hasten the marriage with Little Ong, promising to comply with her wishes if it should turn out that the betrothed absent one were dead or unfaithful. To Mr. Ong she made a similar request, and begged him to give her respite for the six months left doubtful by Ahjit's parting words. Partly for the pure, deep love he bore her, and partly for the sake of his friendship with the unfortunate absent one, Mr. Ong consented, and went back to wait patiently for the workings of fate.

But all was in vain. The six months came and went all too swiftly, and Moli must take the husband her parents had chosen for her. There was no Ahjit, no word of him, and no reason beyond his own promise for thinking he would ever come back to claim Moli as his bride. So she, in helpless despair, consented in words to the dreaded marriage. But first she obtained leave to go down to the Port to visit some relatives of the family, and to pay worship to the Queen of Heaven, the local goddess. She still hoped that Ahjit would come in time to save her, or that at least sure and certain tidings of his coming would reach her before it should be too late. In the meantime the parents had sought out and decided on

Missing Page

left Moli and returned to her house. This temple, which was the only one in the village, was a small, mean-looking building. It stood at the end of a short, narrow street, facing south, without any window and with only one door, which was left open day and night. A feeble old man, blinking and hard of hearing, broken by old age and sickness, was the only one who waited in the temple and served the goddess. There was no animation in this old man's face, no light in his eyes, and he seemed almost like a living automaton, a mere item of the temple furniture. In a curtained recess opposite the door, on a stone pedestal, stood the image of the much-worshipped goddess. The image was of clay, but it was so much in the shade and so darkened by smoke and dust and long neglect that you could not tell what had been its original colour. There were two attendants to the goddess, one on either side, standing in an attitude of reverential waiting. The goddess was tall and gracefully draped, and her face was supposed to express benevolent majesty. A small dirty oil-lamp was shedding a feeble glimmer over the table which served as an altar, and the daylight was dim in the temple when Moli entered. She gave a few "cash" to the old attendant, who looked at her for a minute with an air of semi-animated attention. He took her "cash," lit her candles and her incense, and placed all in their proper places. He then went apart and sat down to wait with apathetic indifference for the suppliant to pray and depart.

Moli, with grave sad eyes and heart full of tender love "to agony distrest," but still with pious faith and simple trust in the goddess, knelt down on the small mat before the shrine. After making due reverence by touching the ground three times with her forehead and raising her folded hands to her brow, she made her prayer and spoke after this manner: "Oh! compassionate Lady of Ladies, come down, I pray thee, and hear and answer. I have a great trouble which presses on my mind and saddens all my life, and I must tell it to thee and crave thy gracious help and guidance. My name, Our Lady, is Moli, and I am the daughter of Kim and his wife, who live at the head of the creek. As the luck of my parents has been bad they have no son, and I am their only child and I am now seventeen years of age. My mother brought me up from childhood to look after the pigs, and serve in the shop and keep the accounts of the cargo-barges. In this way I came to know Ahjit, who was employed in a cargo-boat, and it is about him, Gracious Lady, that I am in sore trouble. He is the son of old Tan, who owns four of the barges and lives at the end of the village. When Ahjit came to the shop we talked only of business or common things, but somehow I always liked to see him and to hear his talk. Oh, Lady of Ladies, I did not mean to tell him of my love, and I did not think at first he had any great love for me. But one evening as I came home I saw him standing under the bamboos in the sunset, and my heart told me he wanted to speak to

me. I was going on, but he asked me to stop and hear something he had to say. Then he told me all the story of his love for me, and made my heart, oh, so glad, and he said he would be true to me always if I would consent to become his wife. Then, Divine Mother, I lifted up my eyes and met his, and from that moment all things became new to me. All my heart went out to him, and I told him I loved him and would be true to him all my life. Gracious Lady, I told my mother what I had done, and she rebuked me for talking about marriage with Ahjit, and told me I had done wrong in giving him my promise to become his wife. But could I help it? The lad was good and in earnest, and he spoke me fair and asked for my love in return for his. Then he went far away over the ocean to strangers' lands, and he promised to come back and marry me after twelve or eighteen months. Now the full time is up, and he has not come or sent word. My mother wanted me to give up Ahjit and marry Little Ong, and now she has forced me to consent to this marriage. But, oh, our Lady of Compassion, how can I marry Little Ong? I have promised Ahjit and I must be true to him. When my mother told me it was wrong for me to care for him, and said I should give him up and do her bidding, I tried to put away all thought of Ahjit and drive him from my heart. But, would he go? No, our Lady of Mercies, he would not go from me but stayed with me always. I heard his voice among the songs of the birds in the morning, in the hushed

silence of midday, and above the loud clamour of the bargemen in the evening. By day he was beside me in the shop, and under the trees in the waste land, and in the dark nights I fell asleep with pleasant fancies about him and saw him life-like in my dreams. He has been always mixed up in all I thought and said and did. Oh, Lady, forgiving and tender-hearted, forgive me if I have sinned and am sinning. My sweetheart is with me still, even here in thy presence, and my love will never leave me while I live. I am my love's and not another's. He will come back; surely he will return. It is many months since any message came from him, and I know not where or how he is. Perhaps he is now on a ship sailing for this port. Oh, our Lady of Tenderness, give me a sign. Tell me, I pray, is my lover, my husband coming back? Am I to see him soon and join him in life as his true and faithful wife? Oh, if thou canst do it, bring him home quickly, or grant at least an answer to give me hope."

When Moli had finished her prayer she bowed again, and then rose and threw the two tallies to learn the answer. Three times she threw them and each time they fell "no answer." Her tears began to flow, but she dried them and tried to look composed. The old man who had risen from his seat and come over to see the suppliant's fortune advised her to come again in the morning and try her luck once more. It was probable, he said, that the goddess was that evening far away on a saving-

mariners' business or engaged in bringing about suitable weather somewhere. She was certainly far off and occupied with some important and urgent affair, otherwise she would have answered the young lady's prayer. "But come again early to-morrow," he said, as Moli was passing with heavy heart and downcast eyes away from the little temple.

She did not return to her relatives' house that evening as they expected, but crossed in a boat to the other side of the lagoon and then climbed the rocky headland. All the top was at the time still and deserted. No one was to be seen on it but the one-eyed, halting old mariner who lived there and whose business was to look out for vessels. Moli walked towards the lower end of the headland and sat down at a spot about midway near the edge and immediately above the depression. From her seat she commanded a view of the sea stretching far away in three directions. Before her in the west was a gorgeous airy pageantry of many-hued, many-shaped clouds, in the midst of which the sun was slowly and grandly moving downwards. No wave raised a white line on the dark surface of the sea, and there was only here and there a tiny sail of a fishing-boat to break the perfect monotony of sombre colour on the ocean. And there was no sound to be heard except the mournful hushing whisper of the surge in among the boulders below. The sea-eagles had gone to their nests in the cliff and the bats were coming out to flutter round and round in the gloam-

ing and night. Moli strained her eyes gazing west and south in hope—dying hope—of seeing the great white sail of a foreign vessel. But no such sail was in sight and daylight was beginning to fade away. Still the love-distracted maiden sat there with hands clasped on her knee and her face turned to the sea debating some serious question in her mind. At length, long after the sun had set and the soft magic of the dim moonlight was on the water, she rose, and following the narrow dangerous goat-track which she had discovered, she descended the front of the headland to the great loose rocks which lay below. Perched on the outmost corner of one of these she sat for a little while muttering prayers and confessions, turning her face at times towards heaven and at times towards the quarter from which her lover should come. Then, after gathering the folds of her dress close together she raised her folded hands in wifely reverence to him who was her lover and husband. "Ahjit," she said, "don't blame me; we were not to be united here, but we may be in the other world or in a future life; you see I keep my word and am true; I cannot be another's; I am yours in this life and for ever. Come to me when you pass away if you are still true to me. In three days I must marry Little Ong if I live, and so, my lover, my husband, there is no way but this." With these words she gently slipped from the rock into the swelling sea, which lapped her in its deep dark bosom and then softly drew back.

When Moli did not return to her relatives they supposed that she had gone straight home from the temple by one of the barges, and had not time to say farewell, so they were not very uneasy. But next day they learned that she had not reached her father's house. Inquiry was at once made and she was traced to the headland, but nothing could be learned of her movements beyond the headland. The old look-out man had seen her arrive on the summit, but he turned into his hut for the night and did not see anything more of her.

In the afternoon of the day after Moli was missing the fishermen of the little village behind the cliff were making ready to go out for their night's fishing. One of them descried a strange bright object borne on the water, and a boat went out to learn what the object was. It was the body of Moli, a little battered and bruised, and the men brought it ashore. News had been spread about the missing girl and the body was soon taken over to the relatives' house. Word was sent to the parents, the corpse was put in a coffin, and late next day a barge conveyed Moli back to her home. She was buried in the open ground a little distance outside the bamboo hedge and in sight of the spot at which she had plighted her love. Her mother wept bitterly over her loss and her father was inconsolable for the sad untimely death of his daughter, a death which, as he told his wife, might have been prevented.

A few days after Moli was laid in the earth, in the

first week in May, a vessel came into the Port, and among her passengers was Ahjit. He had come back with a few hundred dollars hoping to find his betrothed well and still his, and to be soon married. But Little Ong, who met him at Creek Head, told him all the news, and did not shrink from upbraiding him for not having come or written sooner. The shock of the tidings stunned the hapless lover, and he went about for a day or two in a dazed distracted state of mind. As soon as he could he explained to Ong that he had sent word as often as he could, but up-country he had been attacked by a severe illness and there was no opportunity of sending letters or messages. The scenes of his former life were now too sad and dreary for Ahjit, and after a stay of a few days at home he gave all his money to his parents and left the place for ever.

Mr. and Mrs. Kim continued to live for some time in their house and carry on the business as before, but they became tired of the work, which was hard and irksome to them without their little daughter. At length they sold the establishment to Little Ong, who then came to live there. He still had a tender affectionate memory of his only love, and it was his love for Moli which made him buy the house and land. He was still living there and unmarried when I left the place and the island.

Widow Lee and her Second Marriage

MAY a widow marry in our country? Of course, Mr. Foreigner, a widow, except in certain exceptional circumstances, is free to marry, and may do so any time after three years from the death of her late husband. But in many circles of society it is not considered the proper thing for a woman to marry a second time, and generally speaking sentiment in China is against such a proceeding. In cases, however, where a widow is left destitute with young children she is justified in taking a husband to support herself and her children. So also where the widow is rich, having property in houses, fields, or a mercantile establishment, she is wise in marrying a man who can take care of and manage her property. In some parts of the Empire it is not unusual for a woman left alone with property to ask a man whom she knows to be honest and friendly to take her as wife or concubine, in order that she may have her affairs attended to properly, and may have a protector against designing rogues covetous of her property.

If you care to hear it, sir, I can tell you the his-

tory of a second marriage of recent occurrence. It is not a very long story, and as the circumstances were of a peculiar, very uncommon kind, you may be interested in hearing them. The details of the case I have had partly from the family concerned and partly from friends and neighbours. You can test the general accuracy of my narrative if you wish, for there are many still living who remember some of the early events.

The widow of whom I have to tell was originally a Miss Kim, a daughter of rich parents residing at a village a few miles north from the city of Foochow. She had been married in the usual manner to a Mr. Lee, also of Foochow, a young man of wealth and position but of a sickly and delicate constitution. Their union was a pleasant and satisfactory one, but it was of short duration. Mrs. Lee was only seventeen years of age when she was married, and she was left a widow before she was twenty. Her husband died in the third year of their married life after a severe and painful illness, throughout which he was faithfully attended by his young wife. Mr. Lee's parents had died some years before he was married, and he survived his brother and sister. He did not leave any child, and all his property passed into the possession of his widow.

A part of this property was the piece of land on which stood the dwelling-house and appurtenances of the Lee family. This piece of land was situated in the southern suburb of Foochow, on the north side of

the river, and to the west of the main street. A strip of the ground facing this street, and another strip facing the street on the west side, had been cut off and let to shopkeepers. From these lots the owner derived a fair income, as the rents were good and sure. All between these two slips of ground was reserved by the Lee family for its own use, the main entrance to the premises being in the cross street which lay to the south of the plot of ground. The premises themselves were large and substantial, and furnished with all the requisites of a middle-class Chinese residence.

When Mr. Lee died his wife was sorely distressed, and wept and lamented with passionate outbursts of sorrow by day and night. She observed all the rules and regulations about the ceremonies due to the dead and all the prevailing customs required by the etiquette of mourning. The funeral was an imposing ceremony at which no expense was spared, and the relatives and friends of the deceased expressed their complete satisfaction and approval.

For some time after the burial of her husband the widow went frequently to his tomb, and there wept for a while in a transport of apparently uncontrolled grief. At such times she vowed again and again to live a lonely widow, and she told her dead husband she would soon rejoin him in the other world. It seemed to be the desire of all the relatives that she should bear her lot patiently, and lead the dignified and not unenvied life of a rich widow. This was

also apparently the resolution at which the young widow herself had arrived, and her relatives expressed themselves much pleased with her becoming and perfectly exemplary deportment.

But Widow Lee was a loving, tender-hearted woman, who could not live without some one of the opposite sex to love and care for and slave for. When she began to attend to matters after her husband's decease she tried to console herself with the fancy that she would enjoy her freedom and the right to manage her affairs as she pleased. But she was without education or experience, and consequently in some matters she was easily deceived or persuaded against her better judgment. She had been brought up, like Chinese girls generally, in great ignorance, and she had been accustomed to a life idle, aimless, and useless. So, although possessing good natural abilities and having a desire to do her work, she found herself in the course of two years unable, as she fancied, to control her establishment and to manage the property. She began also to feel a strong longing for some one to love, some one to whom she could appeal for sympathy, and on whom she could rely for counsel and assistance.

Thus Widow Lee gradually came to the conclusion that she could not keep her vow of perpetual widowhood, and that she could not continue to live without a husband. The first one to whom she imparted her change of mind and feeling was the old maid-servant, who was also her chief confidante and woman-

of-business. This woman was a faithful domestic, but most undemonstrative and unsympathetic in appearance. Nothing that occurred ever seemed to surprise her, and she was apparently indifferent to all the accidents of life. In the present case she heard the important news from her mistress with the same quiet indifferent manner with which she listened to the most trivial everyday communication.

The news that the young and rich Widow Lee wished to renew the marriage cup soon spread, and the gossiping servants reported various proposals and speculated on the answers. The widow, however, made a choice which took every one by surprise and created a scandal of many days' duration.

At Foochow, as at other large cities of China, the street beggars are a characteristic institution. These wretched creatures, in their rags and dirt, often afflicted with sores or covered with skin diseases, are so repulsive in appearance and manner that they seldom excite compassion among our people. They are to be seen in little groups on the old bridge or on the steps of much frequented temples or in the courts of the clubs and other public buildings. They seem to sit in such places for hours, but they apparently do not beg in them nor do they take much notice of passers-by. They are much given to the needful exercise of self-examination, but otherwise they seem to be idle and without any cares or troubles. While they are at rest these beggars do not annoy people, and no one takes much notice of

them, but when they proceed on their begging rounds they become a great nuisance to the community. They go into shops and make various kinds of horrible noises until the "cash," which is their poll-tax, is paid to them. They will stand in the passage or at the door of a private house, making themselves so objectionable to the inmates that these are obliged to give alms in self-defence. At night these beggars slink off in various directions to have their supper and their sleep. Some go to the headquarters and take orders from the chief or "king," some go to lodge in wretched sheds, which give little shelter from rain and wind, and others lodge undisturbed in depopulated coffins or charnel-houses.

Now among the beggars to be found in Nantai, the southern suburb of Foochow at the time with which my narrative is concerned, was one who had excited the interest and ultimately engaged the heart of Widow Lee. Like his fellows and companions, this man was always in unseemly rags and horrid dirt, and he went about armed with the usual staff and furnished with a bowl. He was a tall, thin, loutish fellow, with a look of permanent misery for which no remedy or alleviation was expected; but there was a latent twinkle in his eye with an occasional twitching of the lips which seemed to hint at better moments. He was a little taller than his comrades, and because his neck was a little longer than any among them they nicknamed him Long-neck. His surname, it was understood, was Wang,

but he was known to all only by his nickname. With his fellow-beggars Long-neck was somewhat of a favourite, as he was of a yielding, good-tempered and light-hearted disposition, and he had some wit and humour, by means of which he could make them forget their pains and troubles for a little. He, however, had only one constant companion, the pariah dog, which was with him wherever he went or lodged. This dog was a study in skin and bone with an expression. But she was a dog of considerable character, quick in perception, swift in action, and discreet in valour. Wherever her master went she followed, keeping from him at a distance, which was long or short as she saw circumstances required. But she catered for herself daily, and took care of herself in the crowded thoroughfares.

The Widow Lee had happened to see Long-neck on several occasions, had felt pity for him, and had finally become enamoured of him. At first the idea of uniting herself to a beggar was repulsive to her, and such a match she knew would alienate all her friends. But after long consideration she overcame her scruples and determined to have Long-neck for her husband if he was unmarried. In the course of time she communicated her resolve to the old female servant, who did not express any surprise, but rather seemed to have been expecting the communication. The servant warned her mistress, however, against the carrying out of her proposal, and showed her what serious consequences there would be if the

marriage should take place. But her mistress knew what she was doing, and had made up her mind on the subject. She entrusted the old servant with the delicate mission of ascertaining whether Long-neck was single, and, if he were so, of letting him know the state of the widow's feelings towards him. The servant was also to find out whether, in the event of his being single, Long-neck would be disposed to abandon his present mode of life and become a decent member of society as the husband of her mistress.

In the course of time the maidservant was able to report that Long-neck was not married, and that he was prepared to reciprocate Widow Lee's feelings, give up his present way of life, and become the widow's husband. Soon afterwards the widow had an interview with the fortunate beggar, and told him personally of her affection and her desire to become his wife. He was greatly pleased, and with some difficulty expressed his willingness to give up his present career and become her true and faithful husband, returning to decent settled ways of life. When it was agreed that the marriage should take place at an early date, Long-neck left to the widow the management of whatever formalities she considered necessary. It was now more than three years since the death of Mr. Lee.

When the announcement of the intended marriage was made to the widow's friends and the relatives of her late husband, they were all very angry, and

expressed themselves as much disgusted at the step which Mrs. Lee was about to take. Some of them came to reason with her, and tried to dissuade her from the humiliating and debasing union which she was going to make. They showed her that if she found it necessary to be remarried, a suitable husband could be found among their equals and acquaintances. But, they argued, the state of widowhood is most honourable, and fidelity to her deceased husband would bring her praise and esteem. Widow Lee listened to the arguments of her friends, and then told them quietly and firmly that her mind was made up, and that her plans were settled. It was needful for her, she explained, to have present with her some one whom she could love and serve, some one also who could protect and cherish her, and help her in the management of her affairs. The man whom she was about to wed, though unfortunately a beggar now, was, she said, a good man who had been brought low by adverse circumstances, and she was confident he would make a good and reputable husband. He had excellent abilities, a gentle and amiable disposition, and his antecedents were at least free from crime and dishonour,

Immediately after Long-neck agreed to become the widow's husband he abandoned his profession of beggar and went to lodge in a comfortable inn. He at once made himself clean, had his head shaved and his queue properly plaited and supplemented by the

customary black silk thread. Clothes, according to the fashion, were supplied to him or made for him, and he was soon able to appear in the proper dress of a middle-class Chinaman. All his expenses in these matters were defrayed out of funds supplied to him by the widow, who was most desirous that her new husband should make a good appearance at the wedding. But the man looked and felt ill at ease with his good clothes and strange surroundings, and all the new ways of life and conduct.

The marriage took place on a lucky day selected by a Taoist priest who had enjoyed the patronage and the confidence of Widow Lee for some years. The circumstances of the case did not admit of much outward manifestation of merry-making in connection with the event, and the guests were few as neither bride nor bridegroom had many friends who could be asked to the ceremony. There were some, however, who graced the occasion by their presence, and there was much feasting in the household. The bridegroom and the bride enjoyed the day very much and were both undoubtedly happy, the former now becoming for life Mr. and the latter Mrs. Wang.

All the property that the bridegroom brought with him to his new home was a small pup, the offspring of the faithful intelligent pariah dog. As he felt obliged to part with the latter, he gave her to one of his old associates who was about to emigrate to another district. The pup was a pretty little creature with a body of a light grey colour,

and its feet and the lower parts of its legs of a hue strongly bluish. His name was Neng-a, or the Clever one, a name given in the hope that it would be justified by the dog's future career. Mr. Wang asked his bride to accept the pup as a present, and she readily consented. She was greatly taken with the charming little dog so nice and clean, with his gentle playful ways.

When Widow Lee became Mrs. Wang, she immediately devoted herself in a thorough systematic manner to the improvement of her husband. She set herself to raise him mentally and morally, and to lead him gradually to give up old habits and walk in new ways. This she soon found to be a hard task, as Wang was a lazy careless man apparently without spirit, pride, or ambition, and utterly regardless of the decencies and conveniences of life. It became, however, his wife's great desire and ambition to call forth the good natural qualities which she believed were latent in the man. He was, she had been told, the son of parents once in good circumstances and of excellent character. He had been brought up well and received a fair education, but bad companions and too much indulgence had afterwards spoiled him, and evil habits had grown on him until he became the pariah Widow Lee had found him. She fancied that now, having become his wife, she would have influence by gentle words and soft allurements to win him back to home-life and decent conduct, and to make him a good husband and a respected, useful

member of society. So she provided him with a fair supply of suitable clothes and a comfortable well-furnished room, and with plenty of pocket-money. He had his meals of good well-cooked food served at regular times and with becoming ceremony. He was gradually taught to help his wife in the management of the property, and it was hoped he would soon be able to take his part in all the public deliberations of the responsible people of the district. In short, everything was done to make home-life agreeable and attractive, and to make the man forget the days of his humiliation.

Mrs. Wang's measures for the elevation of her husband were carried out with great tact and devotion, and they seemed to be attended with something like success. Her husband had apparently begun to enjoy the great change in his mode of life; he had taken kindly to permanent shelter, regular meals, and decent ordinary clothing. But he still did not like the restraints which were inseparably associated with these improvements on his former state, and he could not all at once become reconciled to his loss of liberty. Then he found he could not sit down at ease and eat his dinner at a table in a proper manner. His clothes were troublesome, and the shoes and socks specially tormented him, so that it was a great relief for him to be able to dispense with these in the evening. Worst of all, he had no male society at home, and he missed his old associates of the fraternity.

But everything went on well for about two months, when one morning Mr. Wang did not appear at the usual hour, nor could any trace of him be found. The young dog, Nêng-a, had disappeared also. Mrs. Wang was in sore distress when she learned the facts. She feared her husband had been carried off to prison, or had secretly committed suicide, or at least had deserted her for some other woman. Two of her trusty servants were at once sent off to go through the streets searching and making inquiry, and rewards were offered to the yamên runners for the recovery of the man or trustworthy information about him. But Wang had taken precautions against being easily discovered. He had doffed his shoes and socks, and all the other trappings and suits of decent life, and had gone back to the beggars' den. It was easy for him to obtain there two dirty ragged articles of clothing, and donning these he sat down and smoked with old comrades. These shared his "cash" among them, and in return gave him what they could spare of their food. Wang remained in the den for two or three days, and then, attended by the little dog, went a round of begging. He was not very successful, and the chief of the beggars, fearing the man might be recognised, forbade him to do any more begging in the district. But, indeed, Wang did not find the life so agreeable as it had once been and as he fancied it would be again. There was no romance now in going about for hours whining and importuning for alms and lying down at night in cold and dirt. His

former comrades also regarded him with suspicion and dislike when his money was finished, and they ordered him and his dog off their ground. Wang, accordingly, became disgusted, and went back in humble penitence to his wife and comfortable home.

Mrs. Wang was made very happy by the return of the prodigal. She wept copiously at the sight of him, then chid him for his wicked, unfeeling conduct in deserting her and leaving her in suspense and distress, and then she upbraided herself for want of duty and attention. But Mrs. Wang was too much rejoiced by the presence of her husband, safe and sound, though he was dirty and in rags, to waste much time in chidings and regrets. She had not great trouble in coaxing Wang to throw away his rags and make himself clean, and to resume his decent attire and his position as head of the house.

The pup Nêng-a reappeared of course with his master, but he apparently did not enjoy the return to civilised life, and did not readily conform himself to the domestic ways. He was a most cunning and deceitful young dog, dishonest and dissembling to a degree that would have brought discredit to a human being. The pretty tinting had long ago vanished from his feet, and his general colour had become grey with some brownish patches. He was kept clean, however, and good food was supplied to him regularly, so that he had a better appearance than Chinese dogs generally. But after his return from the short sojourn among the beggars it would not be quite

correct to describe him as having his food regularly. There were several other dogs on the premises, and the cook's mate every day prepared, morning and evening, a large bowl of food for each dog. When Nêng-a was a small pup he had milk and congee, and occasionally little fragments of greasy pastry, and these he took with apparent relish. But when he had tasted the pleasures of stolen food, of bones gotten by cunningly devised stratagems, and mouthfuls snatched in ecstatic moments of anxiously awaited inattention, he did not care for the food laid at his feet at regular intervals. To the distress of his mistress and the bewilderment of the cook's mate, he did not eat his breakfast and dinner like the other dogs, but left the food only tasted and nothing more. He then lay down and yawned, and appeared disgusted with things generally. But he did not grow lean, nor show any signs of being starved, and the explanation was at length found in the fact that he always watched his opportunity and stole wherever he could steal. Pretending to be fast asleep, or to have congestion of the liver, he would lie quiet for ever so long until he saw the place clear for action. Then he would rise and proceed quickly and stealthily to a place in which he had observed that eatables had been placed. Having taken what he wanted, generally only a very little, he would return quietly and resume the attitude of a sick patient, or a faithful guardian in delicate health. One day not long after her truant husband's return, Mrs. Wang, feeling tired and out of

sorts, lay down in the afternoon for a little rest in her own room. Her maid brought her a cup of tea and some scones, and placed them on a table near the bed. After a little Nêng-a came in and took a long, steady look at his mistress. Satisfied that she was fast asleep, he leapt gently on a chair and from that on to the table, took two scones in his mouth and descended. He then walked quietly to a secret place and ate them up with great satisfaction. Having done so he came back to the door of his mistress's room and lay down there pretending to keep watch. But Mrs. Wang had seen his performance, and noticed with deep regret his mean villainy. In the course of time, also, Nêng-a was detected in the act of theft by the cook's mate. The latter wanted to skin the dog alive, or burn him to death, or beat him to a pulp. But the tender heart of the mistress relented, and she, after consultation with her husband, allowed the dog to be given away to a great wood-merchant and junk-builder.

Time went on, and Mr. and Mrs. Wang led quiet and retired but not unhappy lives. They had not much society, for the relatives could not forgive her, but she did not care much about their neglect. The dulness seemed, however, to be at times irksome to her husband, and he still showed signs occasionally of the vagrant instinct. Mrs. Wang looked forward to the birth of a child as a sure means of gaining her husband's affection, and of inducing him to take a permanent interest in his home. She longed ardently

and prayed earnestly for a man-child, and she was not doomed to be disappointed. In the fulness of time she brought forth a son, to the great rejoicing of herself and all the members of her household. The coming of this son was indeed a great event for the lonely, half-reclaimed father. He seemed for a time to forget everything else in his absorbing interest in his offspring. The old nurse was too suspicious of him to allow him to have possession of the baby for even a minute, but she graciously allowed him to gaze at the little face, and watch as long as he pleased the workings of the tiny features. All the tender instincts of fatherhood began to bud and burgeon in the wintry life of his heart, and they gave a new force and a new joy to all his nature. The little creature was a wonder and a puzzle to him; but it was his child, and the thought became a pleasure slowly diffusing itself through all his being. From the time he saw his firstborn all hankering after the beggar's life left him completely and for ever. Mrs. Wang's hopes were realised, and she became happy in the double joy of the mother of a son and a wife with a sympathising husband.

From this time also Mr. Wang began to take a new interest in the house, and in the management of his wife's property. He had learned to read and write, and he soon came to comprehend the work and duties of the head of the establishment. In process of time also he took his proper place among the elders and responsible men of his ward.

After an interval of about two years from the birth of her son, Mrs. Wang became the mother of a daughter, to the great delight of the father and not to the sorrow of the mother.

It afforded Mrs. Wang great satisfaction to see her husband taking an active and continued interest in the affairs of the household, and she gradually withdrew from all outward interference. But she still had much to do in keeping Wang from sliding back into careless, lazy ways. It was true he had no longer any desire to return to the vagrant's life, and he thoroughly appreciated the comforts of home. But he had never broken completely with his old associates, and one of these could keep him from serious business by a pitiful story or an interesting reminiscence. Passers-by often wondered to see the clean, well-dressed man standing or sitting engaged in earnest conversation with a pariah of the bridge. At first, and for some time, Mrs. Wang had to instruct her husband in matters of business, telling him beforehand what he was to say and what he was to do. Very often after a talk with a beggar he forgot his instructions, and came back having made a great muddle. But as time went on he became more clear-headed and more interested in affairs, and consequently forgot less frequently what he had to do and say. In money matters he was always careless and foolish, usually giving away the contents of his purse to the first beggar with a sad petition. This lavish and silly almsgiving distressed Mrs. Wang, who

reasoned with her husband and tried to make him discriminating and moderate in his charity.

In the meantime the little son of the Wangs was growing up into boyhood. He had been a lively, handsome infant, and his parents loved him too well and not wisely. As he grew up into boyhood he developed traits which caused his mother some serious thoughts. A furtive look had come into his small grey eyes, there was a growing tendency in him to tricks and mean ways, and he had acquired a restless, indolent manner. When he was ten years of age his parents sent the boy to a good school about half a mile from the house, thinking that intercourse with other boys of his age would wear off his unpleasant peculiarities. The master was much pleased with his new pupil, who was clever at learning and apparently diligent and attentive. But his fellow-schoolboys disliked the lad from the first and would not have any friendship with him. He was mean and ugly, they said, and as he was small for his age and of a dark yellow complexion, they gave him the contemptuous nickname Dried Shrimp. The boy resented his treatment by the others, and joined himself to one or two who were equally unpopular. He retaliated on his enemies by little acts of pilfering, and by tricks of all kinds to their discomfort or injury. They still called him Dried Shrimp, however, and hated and shunned him, speaking to him only in terms of coarse abuse. So in the course of time the school became unbearable

to the wretched boy, and he resolved to fly from it and home, and to have a wild, jolly life without any control. He carried out his resolve, and the other boys were not sorry when one morning he did not appear at school, and it was announced that he had run away from home. Another lad, of doubtful antecedents, was also missing from school that morning, and it was conjectured that the two miscreants had gone off together on some concerted, wicked and mischievous enterprise.

The fact was, Dried Shrimp had inherited an instinct which constrained him to become a vagrant. By the working of this instinct he had become tired of school and of a well-ordered life generally, and he had determined to go wild by joining a gang of street urchins. These boys, unbound apprentices to crime, abound in the cities of China, and Foochow has a fair supply. They are practically without parents or homes, and they have no settled place of living, and no regular means of subsistence. Many of them are the sons of the wretched degraded chair coolies, who are opium sots. These men, whom one may see in numbers on the bridge and at various points in the streets, have deserted wife and child, and cast off all the restraints of decent life. Their houses are often without any furniture or other requisites, and the wife has to earn a living for herself and children in whatever way she can. The boys, as soon as they are able to take care of themselves, go out on the streets to do whatever their hand finds to

do. At the age of eight or nine years they can earn a meal or a few "cash" by carrying a title-tablet in a mandarin's procession, or bearing a lantern or banner at a marriage or funeral. These lads are gamblers from their earliest years, and they beg and steal according to necessity or opportunity. Some of the wretched little creatures go home occasionally on the chance of finding something to eat, and they sleep on the floor or on a board, if there is one left. But many sleep—"roost," it is called—in sheltered corners, on doorsteps, or in the passages of the temples.

It was with a few of these lads in the city that Dried Shrimp and his scapegrace fellow-schoolboy joined company. To obtain admission and right of membership Dried Shrimp pawned his clothes, and with part of the proceeds paid for a jacket and pair of trousers of the dirty, ragged description worn by the other boys. With the rest of the money he bought some hot vermicelli from a street cook for himself and his intimate associates. For the first few days the novelty of freedom from all restraint and the excitement of rough unlawful living gave a zest to the course on which the boy had entered. The shops, the sights in the streets of the city, and the rapid movements of his companions necessitated by their mode of life, made him enjoy the present. He was not troubled much with compunction of conscience as to the past, and he did not try to forestal the future.

When Mr. and Mrs. Wang learned that their son

had suddenly disappeared in a mysterious manner they were sorely distressed and perplexed. The only intimation of the dreadful fact which they received was in a short formal note from the schoolmaster stating that the boy had not appeared at school that morning, and expressing a hope that he was not unwell. On inquiry it was learned that the servants had given the boy his early food, and had seen him go away to school as usual; but beyond these facts nothing could be learned of his movements. No one had any clue to give or explanation to offer for his absence. As he did not return home in the evening it became evident that something serious had occurred, but there was nothing to indicate whither he had gone or what he had done. This uncertainty in which the parents were placed made action on their part very difficult. They did what they could in sending out messengers to make search and inquiry, and they gave information in the various mandarins' yamêns, promising rewards for the boy or news about him. No one, however, seemed to have seen him on that particular day after he left his home, and no one could give more than a guess as to what had become of him. The guesses varied widely, but two seemed to the parents to have some probability. One was that he had been drowned by slipping off the bridge over the creek at full water, and the other was that he had been kidnapped and carried far away to be sold into slavery. The mother, who was extremely sad and desponding, seemed to take the

former view, and the father clung to the faint hope of recovering the lad from slavery. It did not occur to either of the parents that their son might have run away into the city and there become a homeless vagrant as his father had once been. Offers of reward were renewed and increased, and messengers were sent to the parts of the river used by sea-going junks and to the anchorage for foreign vessels. But no clue whatever to their son's fate could be obtained, and day after day passed by and the parents had almost fallen into hopeless resignation.

In the meantime the young truant who was the cause of all this misery and confusion, did not find his wild, lawless life the scene of constant enjoyment he had anticipated. Bad language, blows, and kicks were given to him liberally, but no one had anything good or pleasant for him. He was often cold and hungry, and he was not so clever at petty thefts, quick escapes, and importunate begging as the other boys. So he began to be discontented with the new free way of living, and to regret the loss of home comforts with all their restraints. To go all day in search of a meal and at the end not get anything more than a lump of the burnt scrapings of a rice-boiler at an eating-house was perhaps endurable while there was any fun or excitement to be had, but often there was little or none of either. Then to have to lie out all night alone on a granite slab with no more covering against the cold than his daily rags soon became to the lad exceedingly distasteful and

uncomfortable. It was true that in the excitement of a gamble with a "cash" or two next day, or joining a great wedding or funeral procession at which all kinds of unexpected bits of good luck might turn up, he would forget the cold, comfortless night before. But after a while the rains fell and the waters rose, and the traffic slackened, and there was no more fun and no more food. Then starvation came, and with it came cold and fever, and at last Dried Shrimp lay dreadfully ill on a stone slab under the stage in the court of the great temple on the hill. He was a mere skeleton and was near death, shivering and suffering great pain, when one morning the watchman of the premises happened to pass by very early and was attracted by the boy's coughing and moaning. The watchman stopped and made kind inquiries, and learning from the sufferer who and what he was advised him to hasten home at once. But Dried Shrimp explained that he was too ill and feeble to walk, and he begged the watchman piteously to carry him home, promising that there would be a good reward. Partly influenced by the consideration of the reward, and also partly moved by pity, the man consented. He took up the animated little skeleton in his arms and bore him gently to the house of his parents.

The watchman had not much difficulty in finding Mr. Wang's house, and he was readily admitted by the servants, to whom he told the story of how he had found the boy. They were taken by surprise

and would not take over the boy, but hastened to inform their mistress of the strange event. Mrs. Wang at first was disposed not to believe the story, but still clinging to the last shred of hope she came out to hear and see for herself. The dying child looked with piteous longing at his mother and said with hoarse, feeble voice: "Mammy, mammy, don't you know your little son? I have done wrong, mammy, I have done wrong; have pity and take back your bad little son." No more was needed, and the enraptured mother took her child at once from the arms of the stranger, her eyes gushing with tears, and her whole frame convulsed with agitation. She carried the boy into his own little room which had been kept ready for him since the morning he left it. In her transport of sudden joy the mother called on her husband, her daughter, the old maidservant, and all the other members of the household to come and see and be satisfied that the son of her hope, her lost darling, was actually restored to her and alive. The pale emaciated little patient was laid on his own bed, and warm coverings and hot remedies were instantly supplied. Then the watchman was dismissed with many thanks and blessings and a large substantial reward, which made him feel happy in the consciousness of having done a charitable action. A good doctor was immediately summoned, and a handsome fee was promised to him if he brought the boy back to health and strength. For many days and nights the helpless young sufferer lay on his

bed in pain and weakness, tended by his father and mother and sister and by the old maidservant with unwearying care and affection. With good nursing and skilful treatment he crept little by little from the edge of the grave and came back to life, until at length he was able to move about the house again, and in time was perfectly restored to health. When he recovered he became a very good boy, most obedient and devoted to his parents and strongly attached to his home.

My story of the widow's second marriage is now nearly finished, and it only remains for me to tell shortly the fates of the principal personages that have appeared in the narrative.

The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wang grew up a handsome girl, very like her mother in appearance and in character, with pleasant graceful manners and a gentle affectionate disposition. When she attained the proper age she was betrothed, and in due course married to the man chosen for her by her parents. The day of her wedding was a very sad one to all in the Wang household, and the parting with her was a great sorrow to her father and mother. But the marriage proved a suitable and happy one, and the young wife was allowed to visit her parents from time to time. Mrs. Wang lived to see several grandchildren at her knees, and delighted to pet and spoil them. When the daughter came with one or two of her children to visit her mother, she always went back laden with presents.

The son, to whom a name denoting "Returning-Sunshine" had been given, grew up to be a clever, steady young man, a help and comfort to his parents. His mother at the proper time sought out a wife for him, and she was fortunate in obtaining one who suited and pleased him and his parents. The son and his wife lived on the premises, a house being set apart for them fitted up and furnished by the bridegroom's parents.

Mrs. Wang did not survive her son's marriage many years. She had suffered terribly by his sudden and mysterious flight and by his long absence, which had led her to believe that he was lost. Then the continued strain of watching over the boy and nursing him back to health had preyed on her constitution, never very strong. When her time came she was content to die, for her husband had long been won back to constancy and contentment, and her two children were well provided for and properly settled in life.

When Mr. Wang lost his wife he seemed at first to be disposed to return to his early state of lazy idleness and apathetic indifference. He missed his wife so much every day and all day, and found house-life so lonely and insipid without her, that the craving for the old life, full indeed of hardships but also full of excitement, seemed to be coming back. But the rheumatism from which he had long been suffering and the settled ways of life into which he had gradually slidden kept him at home. Moreover, his

son and daughter-in-law were unremitting in their loving attention to him, and tried by every means in their power to lighten the burden of his bereavement. He died in peace and comfort about two years after his wife, and the bodies of the two were laid side by side in a new burying-place.

I must also tell you what befell the dog Nêng-a, after he was received into the establishment of the timber merchant. Here, too, he followed his habit of stealing his food instead of eating what was provided for him. After some time he was found out and delivered to a coolie who was ordered to drown him. A sampan-man took pity on the dog and obtained possession of him. But Nêng-a could not reform and proceeded to steal as before. So the poor sampan-man could not afford to keep him and gave him away to a beggar. The last time Nêng-a was seen alive he was near a large iron pot half-full of boiling water outside the chief gate of a mandarin's yamên. This wretched dog, coming into this world biassed by inherited depravity and lacking an early training, took wrong views and evil courses all his days. He seemed to be conscious of his wickedness and to recognise that he deserved punishment, for he never resented his treatment, and down to the last he neither barked nor bit.

The Teacher and his Pupils

QUITE so, Mr. Foreigner. The natural scenery of all this region is peculiar and beautiful, and its natural luck-affecting characteristics are, as you have doubtless already observed, remarkably excellent. In this rural little piece of the district the inhabitants are indeed few, but the population is dense enough in the towns and villages beyond the hills and over to the east.

There is a history, sir, connected with that wretched-looking house about which you inquire. It was originally built and occupied by a small farmer, but lately it was the residence of a Mr. Tang. There is no one living in it now, and it has remained uninhabited since Mr. Tang died in it about three years ago. It is, as you see, fast falling into ruin, and it is very unlikely that it will ever again be tenanted.

This Mr. Tang had an uncommon and interesting history. He was not a native of this district, but was born and reared in a village near the Poyang Lake in the province of Kiangsi. About twenty years ago his elder brother was appointed to a public

office in the revenue department in our principal city, and Mr. Tang came with him. The mandarin brother served here for a few years and was then transferred to another post in a different province, but the younger brother preferred to remain here.

Mr. Tang, who was a bachelor, was a tall slight man with a delicate constitution and a nervous manner. By profession he was a teacher, and he was much given to serious reading and study; he was gentle and warm-hearted, but shy and reserved and hard to know. He was very fond of a quiet country life, and he had come to like our hills and valleys with our great river. So when he was left alone here he rented that house and settled in it with his books and few household effects. The house, you observe, is well situated, and it suited the teacher's mode of life, being out in the country and yet not far from town.

Mr. Tang's income, which was small, was mainly derived from teaching. His wants were few, his tastes were simple, and his expenses were consequently very moderate. He lived a quiet secluded life, mixing little with the general world, and having only a few intimate friends or acquaintances. His only attendant was a simple country lad of this district, whose name was Ah-Tu. This boy was the youngest son of the old porter in the yamên lately occupied by Mr. Tang's brother; he was a quiet steady lad, very faithful and honest and much attached to his master.

For some years after he settled here, Mr. Tang was engaged in teaching and training a few young gentlemen of the literary class belonging to the town and district who were preparing themselves for the local and provincial examinations. But about eight years ago he was led to give up all other teaching and to take under his care for education two young boys who were brothers. The coming of these boys to be taught and trained by him was the turning-point of Mr. Tang's life. It was an event which controlled his destiny and at the same time gave him new hopes and aims and pleasures. The story of his life from the day he took charge of these brothers as pupils is a simple one with a sad ending.

Yes, sir, I know all the story, and if you wish to hear them I can relate to you the chief particulars. I was an intimate friend of Mr. Tang all the time he lived here, and I was his nearest neighbour. That house a little beyond to your left, half hidden by trees, is my humble abode. Let us go and sit down up above on that mossy bank under the rock which commands a view along the river's bank up nearly to the walls of the town. The pine-trees and the great rock will shelter us from the sun, which is now going westward. It will not take me long to tell you the story of the last years of my friend and of his sad, strange dying.

Below us as we sit and to the left beyond the deserted house you see the path which winds out and in along the river-bank. Now look to your right

eastward and follow the path where it stretches away to the town. Beyond that little rising which, as you see, the path crosses to disappear on the other side of it, and at a distance of a few hundred feet from the river, you can see the roofs of a cluster of houses in the suburb of the town. These houses constitute the private residence of one of the few rich and influential families of this district. The present head of the family, Mr. Wang, has a large and flourishing business establishment in the town. This he inherited from his father, and he is also the owner of many good houses and of much valuable land. This was the family to which Mr. Tang's two new pupils belonged.

Mr. Wang, who was a man of some culture and of literary tastes, made the acquaintance of Mr. Tang shortly before the brother of the latter left the district, and the two men soon became very intimate friends. The family of the Wangs at this time consisted of three sons and two daughters, the youngest son being only an infant. Mr. Tang became a frequent visitor at the house and he was soon a favourite with all the family. As he made the acquaintance of the two elder boys and gradually won their confidence he began to take an interest in their education and prospects, and to have for them a strong affection which they soon came to reciprocate fully. Their father from time to time described by degrees to Mr. Tang the characters of the two boys, and informed him that he designed them both

for the public service. He often stated explicitly that he wished to have them educated and specially trained with a view to their obtaining office through the orthodox and honourable channel of the State Examinations. The youngest son, he said, was to go into business at the proper time, and in due course succeed his father if all went well.

There was no good school within some miles of their residence, Mr. Wang explained, and the boys were not very strong or robust. The only schooling they had hitherto received had been an imperfect fragmentary one, giving them at irregular intervals and in a stupid, careless manner the first principles of a boy's training. Their teacher had been a poor literary dependent of the family, with no practical abilities and no decision of character. He was always very anxious to do his duty, but he had no authority or influence over his pupils, and he was unable to gain their affections or keep their attention.

Mr. Tang longed to be entrusted with the teaching and training of the two boys, and after thinking the matter over very seriously for several days he at length proposed to Mr. Wang to take his sons as pupils to educate them and fit them for the official examinations. This proposal was gladly accepted by the parents, and the terms were quickly settled. When the arrangement was made known to the two boys they expressed themselves as greatly pleased and perfectly satisfied. The elder son, named Tan-sin, was at this time about twelve, and the younger

one, named Fah-sin, about ten years of age. It was agreed that the boys were to go to Mr. Tang at his house every morning, returning home in the evening, and that he was to have the complete management of their education until they both passed at least the first of the State Examinations successfully.

For some time before the day fixed for the boys to begin their regular attendance, Mr. Tang busied himself in making the necessary preparations. He had the one large reception-room of his cottage altered so as to serve as a schoolroom for the two lads. There was only one large table in the room, and this was removed to the window on the right-hand side of the front door, a cane seat being placed on either side of the table. He also had a small set of bookshelves hung upon the wall between the door and the pupils' table. One or two small tables, a chair, and a few other articles of household use completed the furniture of this room.

The preparations were all made and the chief room was in order the day before that on which the pupils were to make their first appearance. They came in the morning at the appointed hour, and from that day the character and habits of Mr. Tang seemed to have undergone a great and lasting change. He now became active and cheerful as if he had begun a new life with bright aims and happy prospects. He read and studied with method and definite purpose, and he enjoyed his work of teaching and training the lads most thoroughly. Moreover,

these two scholars had such gentle winning manners, were so intent on learning and so obedient and respectful, that their master's affection for them and his interest in them soon became the absorbing passion of his lonely life. I do not wish you to understand me as implying that the boys were always quiet, grave, and generally well-conducted in his presence, or that they never indulged in boyish frolic in school or out of school. On the contrary, they both seemed to have always excellent spirits, and they enjoyed a game and a joke and a good story thoroughly, and they would at times burst into play even in school and in the presence of their master. The younger, Fah-sin, was especially lively, and he could not sit quietly and attend to his books in school seriously for any long period. When the two brothers were on their way to or from school, Fah-sin never walked for even a few minutes consecutively in the quiet steady manner of Tan-siu. He would begin by keeping alongside his brother for a short distance, trying to take steps twice the length of his brother's, then he would hop and skip for a few paces, or run after a bird or a butterfly. For a change he would walk a little while quietly beside his brother with his hand on the latter's shoulder, or holding and twiddling his queue, talking all the time about the little affairs in which they were both interested. But on their way to school, as they drew near to the house the little fellow always became very serious and steady, and walked

in a proper sedate manner, especially if he saw the teacher standing outside. For the young lads had a reverence and an affectionate esteem for their teacher such as is very rare among schoolboys. They yielded a willing and cheerful obedience to all his requests, tried to do what pleased him, generally learned their lessons tolerably well, and always listened with grave attention to all his expositions and illustrations. From their first coming to Mr. Tang they were never afraid of him, but regarded him rather as a strict but affectionate father than as a severe and exacting master. A word or gesture, or even a look, was always enough to bring them to order from any frolic or momentary inattention.

The teacher also, on his side, became thoroughly devoted to his two pupils. He loved them with the wise affection of a father and gave himself up entirely to their education and preparation for future official life. At the same time he also watched over and assisted in the formation of their characters and the development of their natural endowments. He never inflicted punishment of any kind on either of the lads, nor did he ever speak to them in anger, or even with severity. He thought of his pupils, and planned and wrought for them day and night; he lived only for them, and he made his dream and anticipation of their future careers part of his own existence.

In educating his scholars the teacher first took them gradually and carefully through the "Four

Books," the works of the immediate disciples of Confucius and Mencius. These books the boys had already learned, but in a careless manner and without understanding their contents. Their present teacher, however, was mindful to point out to the pupils as they advanced in their reading the important lessons which these scriptures contained, and he took pains to explain the difficult passages. Thus he gave his scholars a lively interest in their teachings and made it easy for them to learn the books by rote. Passing from these the teacher next guided his pupils through the venerable old classics, edited and transmitted by the great Sage, and so on to the historians and other standard authors of later times. He also taught the boys, especially the elder, the art of composing verses and writing essays in the manner required for the examinations. All his teaching, which was mainly of a practical character, was real and thorough, and he did his utmost to make learning pleasant to his pupils. When they read with him the ancient canonical treatises and the terse, dry paragraphs seemed to puzzle and confuse them, he pointed out with gentle patience, in winning words, the half-hidden wisdom which the dark sentences were designed to teach. When the lads found their lessons dull and seemed to lose heart and energy, he drove off listlessness and roused their drooping spirits by tales from antique lore of mighty heroes fighting wondrous battles in defence of sovereign and

country, or of scholars who depressed by poverty yet struggled to fame; or of statesmen renowned for great wisdom and stern principle. And all the time and always there was present to his mind, as a moving power, the prospect of his dear pupils when their course of training was finished succeeding at the State Examinations and so entering the public service of their country. Then he pictured them to himself as kind and just magistrates and wise governors, and so rising to the highest positions and earning deathless fame as administrators and statesmen of supreme ability and unswerving integrity. And the ken of his mental vision reached complacently beyond their official careers and beyond the tomb. For he saw them after death enrolled by Imperial Decrees in the State Annals among the great and good of their time, and admitted to the honours of posthumous worship in public temples. All would come, he believed, in due time and in the proper manner if only the unseen controlling forces would be propitious at the proper occasions. Fate was wayward and the future was hard to guess and provide against, but the teacher had a confident, cheering hope that destiny would not obstruct or thwart the plans for his pupils.

In the course of four or five years the two lads had made excellent progress, and became proficient scholars. The elder brother was so far advanced that he was apparently ready to enter the lists for the first examination. He had already announced

his intention to try his fortune, and had expressed a strong desire to be allowed to compete at an early opportunity. His father and the teacher, who took counsel together on the subject, were well satisfied and gave their consent. The teacher fondly thought he now saw his dearest hopes about to enter on the first stage of realisation, and he revelled in bright happy fancies. He had already consulted with the father about the observance of certain formalities necessary as preliminaries to entering for the examination. But fate had settled the fortunes of the two lads in its own way, and the designs and anticipations for both of them went all awry.

Three years ago, in the early spring of the year, there came a morning on which the two pupils did not come to school at the usual time. During the forenoon of the previous day they had been apparently in their ordinary health, and had worked at their lessons with their wonted vigour. But in the afternoon of that day they were both plainly out of sorts, unable to apply their minds and painfully dull and restless. So the teacher readily yielded to their request, and allowed them to go home about two hours before the usual time. I remember seeing him that afternoon standing a few paces from the eastern gable of his house and watching the lads as they walked homewards. The two boys both went quietly and slowly as if tired, and when they reached the top of the rising ground over there they stopped as if to rest for a moment and turned round. Seeing

the teacher standing near his house and looking in their direction they raised their hands, with their books in them, to their heads, and made the customary bow. When they saw the teacher acknowledge the little act of affectionate respect they turned round and went on their way home. Of course I did not know the cause of the boys going home so early and walking so quietly.

When the lads did not turn up at the usual hour next morning Mr. Tang began to feel uneasy and to have gloomy thoughts and forebodings. He came out several times to the front of the house and looked long and anxiously in the direction by which the boys should come. When he had waited for some time and they still did not appear he became restless and impatient, and at last he sent his servant to Mr. Wang's house to inquire what was the reason for the delay in the coming of the pupils. While this servant was on his way to the house he met a messenger sent by the Wang family to tell Mr. Tang that the two boys had been attacked by fever, and could not attend school that day. The servant at once turned back, and the messenger went with him to the teacher's house. In reply to inquiries made by Mr. Tang the messenger stated that on the previous evening, after their return from school, the two young gentlemen had complained of severe pains and heat and general discomfort, and he added that they could not take any food. Their mother, he said, had at once sent them to bed, and despatched a messenger

to summon the chief doctor of the town, who had answered her summons immediately. When the doctor came he asked the young gentlemen some questions, felt their pulses, and prescribed for them, stating to the mother that they were both suffering from severe fever with complications. He warned their mother earnestly to take great care of the patients, and said that he hoped to be able to restore them to health in a few days if his instructions were duly carried out and no unforeseen development appeared. As Mr. Wang feared that the teacher, not knowing the cause of the young gentlemen's absence, might be uneasy in mind, he had sent him, the messenger added, to explain the state of affairs.

Mr. Tang listened to the message very attentively and with apparent composure, and dismissed the messenger with thanks and greetings for his master. He then sat down to read in one of his favourite books, the "Tso Chuan," the great commentary on the "Springs and Autumns" of Confucius. But his heart was troubled and his mind disturbed, and so he soon closed the volume and laid it back on its shelf. He then walked over to my house to see me, and told me of the sudden illness of his pupils, which had unexpectedly given him a day to himself. We talked together of general matters, the changeable weather, and the need for a little rain, for a short time; but he was evidently uninterested in the conversation, and I quickly saw that he was trying to assume before me an air of calm apathetic

indifference. I knew, however, that he was devoted to the two boys, and that the news of their sudden illness was affecting him more than he liked to show. I tried to engage his attention, but his eyes kept turning to the window, his hands twitched nervously, and his thoughts were evidently wandering away from the subjects of our conversation. I was not much surprised, accordingly, when after a stay of only a very short time he rose to take leave, and went back to his own house.

Late in the afternoon of the same day, feeling anxious about my friend and desirous to learn about his pupils, I walked over to Mr. Tang's house to see him, and make inquiry about the two lads. I was very desirous to brighten my friend up a little and keep him from falling into a state of melancholy and despondency. As I had feared, I found him very unhappy and quite disconsolate, for his servant, whom he had sent to the Wang family, had just come back and reported that the two lads were much worse. They were both in great danger, the doctor had said, but as they were very young and had good constitutions, he still had great hopes, and he thought there might soon be a change for the better. I tried to lead Mr. Tang to take hope from the doctor's words of comfort, and to trust to the doctor's skill and the good nursing of their mother to bring the boys through their illness. But all my talk and arguments had little effect, for my friend's mind was evidently too full of sad and anxious thoughts, and much preoccupied

with gloomy forebodings. So I recommended him to have supper and go early to bed, wished him a good night's sleep, and left him shortly after sunset.

Next morning, as I learned, a messenger came over from the Wang family to tell the teacher that the two young lads had passed away shortly before daylight, and almost at the same time. The news came as a dreadful surprise and shock to the tender-hearted teacher, and it seemed to require some time and a great effort for him to grasp the full meaning of the short, sad message. His servant informed me afterwards that his master made the messenger repeat a second time the distressing news he had brought, and then dismissed him with thanks in a dazed abstracted manner. When left alone in his house the teacher sat down silently on his old seat in the accustomed place, and gazed in an absent-minded manner on the table and seats ready as usual for the pupils' use. Then he rose and walked slowly up and down the room in an aimless manner, and after a time he went outside the house and stood at the corner, looking along the path to the rising ground as if he watched for the coming of the pupils. After remaining outside for a long time watching and muttering impatiently to himself, he came back into the house and sat down again mechanically on his old seat nearly opposite to the door. Rocking to and fro, his servant afterwards told me, and not heeding any person or thing, but absorbed in himself, he sighed and murmured and talked to himself for about an hour.

"My little lads dead!" he moaned. "My two little pupils have passed away. Gone in the spring of life, snatched off in the first bud of promise; my dearly loved lads, the light and joy of my life! Is it indeed so, my little children? Have ye really been taken away so suddenly and for ever? It is hard to believe it. What can ye have done amiss—what proud word can ye have spoken, or what wanton act can ye have done, to rouse the ire and jealousy of the dread god below the Yellow Springs and make him carry you off to his dark realm? The god in his jealousy has robbed me and the world of my boys, torn them from me just as they were making ready to go out into the world and earn noble names. He has cruelly quenched the light that would have shone brightly, and killed lives which would have made the generation better. But no. I am talking wildly; it was not an angry jealous god, but their own stern fate which snatched away the lads. It was to be; their lot was fixed. And for me, I am now alone, alone and solitary in the dark empty world, for ye, my little lads, have gone away never to return to my house. For all the rest of my cheerless, lonesome life I am never again to see your faces or hear your voices in this room—never more to watch for your coming in the morning, or follow with my eyes your going in the evening. Oh, my sons, my sons, where are ye now? Why did ye go away so suddenly and without a word of leave-taking? Are ye indeed gone away, passed from the world never to come back

to me again? Oh, my children, my little children, my heart has gone out to you, my spirit has fled to join you. I cannot stay here to live on alone without you. There is nothing to work for now, nothing to make life bearable, and I must go to you. Wait for me where you are, my little lads, that teacher and pupils may be again together."

With such words, mixed with moans and sighs, Mr. Tang mourned his loss, and all that day the faithful servant could not coax his master to take any food. Twice the wonted homely fare of a bowl of rice with a little fish was served up and twice the teacher sat down to eat, but rose again each time leaving the food untouched. Then when night came and, yielding to the urgent request of Ah-Tu, he at length lay down to rest, sleep deserted him and he lay awake tossing about on his hard bed and moaning and talking to himself about his pupils. In the morning as soon as daylight appeared he rose from his bed, opened the front door of the house, and arranged with his own hands the table and two seats in the usual manner. All this he did with a sad, distracted air, and then went outside and stood looking anxiously towards the town as if watching for the coming of his pupils. Afterwards he came back into the house and paced up and down the room as before until the morning meal was served. He sat down at the table for a little while and tried to take some breakfast, but again he rose and left the food untasted. His servant had now become

much distressed and alarmed, and soon as he could he hastened to my house to tell me about the sad state of his master and to beg me to walk over and see him.

I lost no time in complying with this request and quickly followed Ah-Tu, who hurried back, to the teacher's house. On meeting Mr. Tang I was greatly shocked to find how much he had changed within a day, so worn and pale and haggard did he now appear. After the customary greetings had been exchanged I endeavoured to lead him gradually away from his gloomy musings. So I inquired about his health, urged him to take some food, and tried to induce him to talk. It was very evident, however, that the sudden loss of his two young scholars was working havoc with his mind, and I saw that my proper course was to bring him back gently to a sound and healthy way of thinking about the sad event. And so I proceeded to reason with him in a quiet friendly manner about the apparent error of his conduct in not seeing in the deaths of his pupils merely the common every-day action of destiny. I pointed out to him that he should reflect on this and not repine or rebel, but submit to fate's working with a philosophic mind. "Are you not an orthodox philosopher," I continued, "a disciple of Confucius? And must you not, accordingly, look on this event as one due to the pre-ordained arrangements of Providence with which neither you nor any other could interfere? My brother, this is

what your philosophy teaches, and should you not rule your life, order your thoughts and feelings and words and actions in every crisis by the precepts of philosophy?"

My friend heard all I had to say patiently, and for the most part in silence and without showing any dissentient sign. When I ceased talking he seemed to be absorbed in thought and sat still, apparently reflecting on what I had said. So I began to feel comforted in the thought that my words had made some good impression on him. But a few minutes after I stopped speaking I saw a strange light pass into his eyes. Then he rose, and in an excited, reckless manner he broke the silence, and burst into a flood of passionate utterances, exclaiming, "Why must you talk to me now of philosophy? What can that do for me in my present trouble? Can it bring back to me my two little pupils—the only joy and brightness of my life? Well enough did philosophy serve a purpose when we three spent the days together and drew wisdom from the lore of the ancients. It was easy then to talk calmly of death, to read and reason about it as merely a dissolution of soul and body, the former escaping to be absorbed in the infinite expanse and the latter being restored to mother earth. Once we three could talk with quiet pulses and unmoved hearts about men dying young, with bright hopes unrealised and high resolves unfulfilled. But now that fate has come and with ruthless suddenness snatched from me the two lives with which

my own was darkly bound, which made all my life, all is changed, and philosophy has for me no consolation and no anodyne. Do I not know myself that the niggardly number of the days of my children was counted out long ago by old fate, and that their sad destiny could not be altered or avoided? But to know all this gives no help, no comfort in my heavy loss. Oh, my brother, tell me not of philosophy; only give me back my two lads, bring them again here to their table and books. Let me see their dear faces upturned to me once again; let me hear the ring of their happy laugh, the clamour of their young voices chanting the sacred books. But, ah, it cannot be! I know it cannot be; the children are gone, and gone for ever. No, no; no philosophy, no more philosophy. The uses of books have gone for ever, the charm has passed from their pages, the words of the sages are empty, and all learning is hollow and useless. If they two were here we should have all and be happy, but theirs was a short destiny, and they have passed away and left me only a blank which can never be filled. Oh, come back to your desolate old teacher, my dear little lads! Come back from the dark, cheerless underworld. Come again to your teacher and take your seats here before him once more. Oh, for one sound of your voices, one sight of your faces! better to me than all the teachings of sages, more far than all philosophy. Take away for ever your high cold philosophy; it is not for me any more.

But give me again my pupils, my beloved children, or take me at once away to them."

This wail of sad, incoherent despair was uttered by the teacher as he walked up and down the room, throwing up his hands from time to time in passionate, hopeless appeal. When at length he sat down exhausted I took up the conversation again, and tried once more to lead the sorrow-stricken man gently away from the sad thoughts and feelings which darkened and oppressed his mind. But I had little success, and after a time I had to abandon the effort as useless and hopeless. It was late in the day, and darkness had set in when I left Mr. Tang, and he was then about to sit down to supper, and after that he was to go to bed; but from the statements made to me by his servant next day I learned that the wretched, heartbroken man again could not eat, and that he continued to talk and moan and walk to and fro until he seemed to be quite worn out. The servant then pressed on him the necessity of taking some rest, and at last prevailed on him to go to bed. Soon after he lay down the teacher seemed to have fallen into a sleep, but a very unquiet one, for Ah-Tu heard him talk and toss about. The faithful servant, who was lying on his own bed over against the wall in the next room, though very tired and sleepy, tried to keep awake; but he may have dropped off into a sleep, for he thinks he was awakened by a loud call from his master. "Ah-Tu, Ah-Tu, rise," the master cried out; "the two

young gentlemen will soon be here; the day is breaking; I can see the light through the chinks and crevices. Rise quickly and open the large door, and then sweep the room clean, and set the table and seats in order, and have some boiling water ready."

Ah-Tu went to his master, assured him that it was still night and dark, and begged him to go to sleep again. The teacher then lay down and remained quiet, having apparently fallen into a doze again; but after a short time he rose hurriedly from his bed, saying loudly, "Yes, my lads, I am coming, coming presently. It is rather late, and the morning is dark and cloudy, but there will soon be clear daylight. I will be with you presently." Then there was a heavy fall, and the servant hastened to raise his master and lay him on his bed again. As Ah-Tu chafed the hands and stroked the face of the teacher, soothing him with gentle words of pity, the teacher, in a weak, broken voice asked, "Is that you, Tan-sin? I am glad you have come at last; but where is Fah-sin? You are not Tan-sin? Oh, well, no matter. I am going to him. Come——" He tried again to rise, but the servant laid him gently down again with his head on the pillow, and the longing, fretting spirit went free.

We buried the teacher there on that little knoll under the rock; that is his tomb, a little to your left, with the new headstone. We had a fancy that it would please our departed friend to lie there. That rock was a favourite resort of his on summer evenings, and he often sat there reading or studying or

working out the future of his pupils. Moreover, as you will observe, the rock commands a view of the narrow path along the river's bank, all the way from the pagoda right up to the rising ground. From this rock also you have a view of the graves of the two brothers, the pupils. You see yonder hill, which lies north-east from this and behind the town, rising with an ascent gentle and gradual until near the top; on the side towards us you observe a large, well-preserved tomb with a conspicuous headstone. That is the tomb of Mr. Wang's parents. Near it you can see the little grave mounds of the two unhappy, well-beloved children.

The simple country people of this district say that as they pass this spot in the dim morning twilight on their way to cut fuel on the hills, they often see the pale form of the teacher standing at the side of the rock. He shuns their gaze, they say, but when they have passed they look back and see him come and stand at the same place. He looks sadly in the direction of the pupils' graves for a time and then disappears.

All about these graves in the springtime of the year the wild roses bloom for a season in white mourning, and all the place is then lovely and fragrant. Over the graves, and out of sight in the blue expanse, the lark sings his morning song, and in the ilex hard by you can see the pencilled eyebrow bird and hear him sing his bravest in love's rivalry.

Do the dead hear and see, you ask? Who knows?

The Autobiography of a Mandarin

COME in, please, honourable guest, and take a seat up here. My greeting to you, sir, and I am happy to welcome you to our district. You have come with your family, I have been told, to take up your permanent residence among us. I hope you will find the climate suitable and your surroundings agreeable. May your life here be happy and prolonged, and may your intercourse with us be very pleasant. You probably find this room rather stuffy, so let us drink our tea and then go out into the open air. It is still early in the afternoon and the sun has only reached the west. We can ascend leisurely to the great tallow-trees on the slope a little above this humble cottage. There we can sit down for a while beneath the shade of the trees and enjoy a little conversation.

Yes, truly the air out here is brisk and clear, the sky above is almost cloudless, and the view is charming. Look, Elder Brother, west and north-west beyond the elms and mulberries of my homestead, and see that long wide range of hills spreading far and rising hill above hill until it reaches those great

mountains which bound the horizon. That clump of trees on the ridge of the nearest hill marks the site of the Buddhist monastery, named the Monastery of Eternal Peace. The top of the roof of its principal chamber is visible from here, you observe. Down below and stretching far to south and east is the great rich plain with broad sweeps of cultivated fields and winding streams and creeks, and smoking villages with many a cluster of dark-green trees here and there dotting its surface. The white walls of those tiny shrines by the side of so many pathways, temples of the village tutelary gods, make a pleasant contrast with the green about them. Far off you can see the towers on the walls of the great city and the tree-crowned summit of its ancient pagoda which, as all the simple villagers believe, is sacred and of mighty influence. See also how the lower slopes of our hills and the highlands above the plain are all thickly grown with trees. Our great tallow-trees are in full beauty of leaf and fruit, and soon the lads and maidens of the villages will come to gather the ripe white berries for the oil-press. Near at hand you can see our strange white-fruit tree (Salisburia adiantafolia) with its leaves already yellowing to the fall, and here and there beyond you can distinguish the tall Wu-tung tree (Sterculia platanifolia), its topmost branches gently swaying with the mystic music of the tree. Farther away you can see the oaks and mark how their own dark foliage is intermingled with the lighter foliage of

their unbidden guests. The other and more common trees of our country are probably familiar to you already.

This is indeed, as you say, a place well suited to lure the trouble-fretted, hope-forsaken man to its bosom, and to soothe and cheer him back to health and happiness by Nature's quiet remedies. No creaking waggons rumble on our roads, no trains of merchandise-bearers pass by our doors, and no echo of the great roar of city bustle ever strikes our ears. Our people live here in the simple ways of their early forefathers, ignorant of the great world beyond with all its ceaseless din of change and progress. Here all is, or seems at least to be, peace and quiet contentment, and the man released from years of official work and worry can settle down to enjoy a calm old age and in the fulness of years to pass gently out of the world.

You are right, sir; I am a retired civil official, and though not born in the house I now occupy, yet I am a native of this district. You see down below in the plain by the side of the large stream that small hamlet with the white temple at this end and a row of trees in front. The hamlet is a poor, wretched collection of miserable shanties all occupied by small farmers and agricultural labourers. It was in an isolated cottage at a short distance from the farther end of the row of trees that I was born. My natal cottage is not there now, for it fell into ruins and was abandoned when my father's

family went to live in another house in the neighbourhood.

Yes, my life began and all my early years were spent there, and if you are sure you will not be tired I can comply with your request and tell you while we sit here the chief events of my career. Mine has not been a very eventful life nor one differing much from that of officials generally, at least of those who like me survive to an old age of health and peace, and who have the good fortune to be able to end their days in the places of their youth.

My father inherited a small farm, together with the cottage already mentioned, in which he and the family lived. The land of the farm was fairly good, and yielded rice and wheat crops of average quantity and quality. My mother, who was rather a superior woman, was the daughter of a poor unemployed graduate. Her father had given her some education, but she always had a hard life of toil and privation. She bore my father four sons and two daughters, and I was the youngest of the family, the son of my father's old age. As a child I was frail and delicate, and consequently rather indulged as far as the scanty means of the family would allow. My parents were exceedingly poor, finding it hard to feed and clothe us all, and my brothers had to begin early in life to work in the fields. My mother and sisters had also to work hard, especially when there was pressure on the farm. Our food was very plain and never abundant, and our clothing was coarse homespun.

Among the few regular visitors to our house was the chief monk of the Buddhist monastery over there. He was a distant relative, I believe, of my mother, and he often called in to see her and my father and to hear and tell the country gossip. This pious, good old man had much to do with the rough-hewing and shaping of my life. While I was still a weak little child he foretold that I should grow up to be a scholar and a graduate, and eventually rise to be a pillar of the State. He described often to my too credulous mother the fated symbols of my large ears, square chin, broad face, and all the rest of my physiognomy. He was a simple-minded, kind-hearted man living up to his profession and an honest believer in his religion.

My parents sent me first to the little school of our village, where I learned all that the rustic master could teach. From that school I was sent, on the advice of our friend the monk, to a select class kept by a superior teacher for older boys from all parts aiming at the State Degrees. This class met in a guest-room of the Monks' monastery, and the pupils had free access to all parts of the temple and its grounds. Our teacher understood his business thoroughly, and though he did not profess to train his disciples to be profound scholars and good thinkers, he fitted them for competition in the public examinations for the State Degrees. Those of the pupils who liked study for its own sake were free to leave the prescribed course and indulge their

tastes as much as they pleased, especially in their hours of leisure. As for me, I knew that while I was learning with this teacher my parents were stinting themselves and my brothers and sisters in the ordinary comforts and even necessaries of life, in order that I might qualify myself for official appointment. I felt it to be my duty, accordingly, to apply myself with all diligence to the necessary work immediately before me, and to do my utmost to make myself ready as soon as possible for the examination for the first Degree.

In due course my name was entered in the official list and I went to the town to compete for this Degree. The examination was of the usual kind, and I had the great pleasure of reporting my success to my parents and the monk. Then after continuing my studies with the teacher in the monastery for three years more, and observing the necessary formalities, I went to the provincial capital and obtained a high place in the Second or Chü-fen Degree.

My parents were greatly pleased and elated with the news of my success, and the old monk, who became excited with delight, walked over to the house to congratulate the family. He spent ever so much money also in getting up entertainments for the friends and acquaintances who called to wish my parents joy on the happy event. It was at the monk's expense also that I obtained the ceremonial hat and robes to which I had now become entitled. He insisted, moreover, with my parents that I should

be allowed to go to the capital to compete for the Metropolitan or Chin-shi Degree, which he confidently predicted I would certainly obtain. At this time I was full of ambition, and was naturally desirous of going to Peking to try my luck ; but the question of expenses seemed to bar the way. Here again the generous monk was a good friend, for he undertook to provide enough money to defray the necessary travelling and other expenses of the journey. He also promised to furnish me with one or two letters of introduction to friends at the capital who might be useful to me if I needed assistance. So at last it was settled that I should go up for the Chin-shi examination. When the time came for my departure I took leave of my parents and the good old monk, and set out on my long journey to Peking attended by a servant, a foundling adopted in childhood and reared by the monk.

This journey was a new experience to me and I enjoyed it very much. The varied traffic on the highway, the noisy bustle at the inns, the different aspects of the country, the strange ways of speech, all excited my attention and kept my mind pleasantly active the whole of the way. On my arrival at Peking I proceeded at once to seek out the residence of the family to which the monk had given me a letter of introduction. By the help of a guide I soon found the house, and delivered the letter from my friend to the master. To my great delight he, after consulting with his wife, said they would be

pleased to take me as a boarder and lodger. Their house was on the south side of a very quiet street in the west part of the Chinese City and about halfway up the street. My rooms were in the back part of the premises, and they opened out on a small garden planted with a few trees and flowers and evergreen shrubs. There were no shops of any kind in this street, and all the houses, which were exactly alike, were occupied by literary or retired official people, either poor or at least in moderate circumstances. Most of the residents knew their neighbours and were on very good terms with them. At the back of each house was a small garden like mine enclosed by a wall about six feet high.

Some time after I had taken up my quarters here I had a strange adventure which greatly affected all the rest of my life. It was my custom to sit outside in the garden during the mild and sunny part of the day and read aloud the books which I was studying. One day on going to take my seat as usual under a tree near the top of the garden and on the west side, I was much surprised to find a neat little envelope lying on the ground. Opening the envelope, I found it contained a verse of poetry in language which seemed to be enigmatical and ambiguous. After puzzling over the words for some time, I seemed to discover that the mysterious rhyme conveyed an intimation to the effect that help in my studies could be given if it would be taken. On making inquiry, I learned that the adjoining house on the

west was occupied by an old gentleman and his daughter. The old man, who was a native of the province of Hunan, was a Hanlin Doctor who had held several high offices in the provinces and had risen to be a President of the Board of Rites in Peking. While holding this office, and about eight years before the time of my arrival, he had lost his sight and been obliged to resign. He had two grown-up sons who were in office in different parts of the Empire, and this one daughter who had lived with him all her life, taking the place of her mother on the death of the latter soon after the family came to live in the capital.

This daughter had received from her father an education far above anything ever given to girls, and she was reported to be clear-headed, learned and thoughtful, even above the average of men. Since the time her father became blind she had been accustomed to read aloud to him every evening and to talk with him about the heroes and heroines of romance and history, the dogmas of philosophy, and the policy of the rulers and statesmen. Coming to the conclusion that it was from this lady the rhyming note had come, I lost no time in preparing a reply in similar language, expressing my willingness to receive the proffered assistance. This written missive was thrown over the wall and the result was awaited with some impatience.

I ascertained from my host that he had told his neighbour, the blind old gentleman, the history of

my coming to the capital. The father had doubtless told the circumstances to his daughter, and the story had interested her. From this, I supposed, arose the interest she seemed to be taking in my fortunes. And I had not long to wait until the kind assistance of my secret benefactor became apparent. First the old gentleman called on me, and learning from myself that I was working for my Chin-shi Degree, he offered me the free use of his library and also any other help in any way that he could give. He told me that as he was blind he had to be dependent on his daughter for keeping his books in order, and for searching out and verifying all references and quotations. Then there came little presents of fruit and other delicacies, and volumes of books were sent to me with the desired passages marked by slips of paper, everything being sent in the father's name and accompanied by his card. Sometimes also difficult questions propounded to the father were answered in little notes purporting to be in like manner from the father. And all this time I never saw the young lady, nor heard her voice, nor carried on with her any correspondence.

In the meantime I was going on vigorously with my preparations for the Chin-shi Degree examinations, and these fortunately occupied all my time. At length the day for the examination arrived, and I entered the hall in a state of great mental excitement. In due time the results were declared, and I was exceedingly delighted to find myself one of the four

highest on the list of successful competitors. The welcome tidings of my good fortune were immediately despatched by special messenger to my dear old friend the monk for communication to my family. Hearty congratulations were given to me by my host and the old gentleman, my kind, good neighbour. I was in a very happy and hopeful frame of mind, for there seemed now to be a fair prospect of my soon obtaining a good official position, and thus being able to repay my parents something—some little fraction of all I owed them.

When all the formalities connected with the conferring of the Degree were over, and I had leisure to reflect a little, I found myself in an embarrassing situation. From the date of my learning who was the kind friend who was spontaneously helping me in my loneliness and poverty, I had become possessed with a strong desire first to know the lady, and afterwards to secure her as my wife. Her kindness to me in my great difficulties, the tales I heard of her cleverness and filial piety, her modesty in not allowing herself to be revealed, even in the gracious offices which she did spontaneously through her father, all wrought on my mind day by day. So I came to be devotedly in love with my unseen friend, and after much hesitation I resolved to do my utmost to obtain her in marriage from her father.

The first one whose assistance I sought in this matter was my host, and he and his wife at once promised to speak to the lady's father on the subject, and

to give their hearty recommendation to the proposed marriage. The father apparently was not much surprised when the suggestion was made to him, and he listened to what my host had to say, and then said he would consider the matter. He was very fond of his daughter and very studious of her welfare, so he thought it right to communicate the errand of my host to her, and to ask her whether she had any objections. The daughter, who, as I learned afterwards, had fallen in love with my idea, dutifully placed herself in the hands of her father, and begged him to choose and decide for her in the matter of a husband. There was, unfortunately, no mother to take action in this case, and so all had to be done by the father, and he, though loth to part with his beloved daughter, felt it his duty to consider her future happiness. After many consultations and much consideration the father at length gave his formal consent through my host. Then the horoscopes of myself and the young lady were compared, and the fortune-tellers announced that everything was favourable to a marriage. So the betrothal was settled, and in due course we were happily married in the orthodox manner. At the marriage my bride and I saw each other for the first time when I raised her veil as we stood together before the family altar.

Now, sir, do you not think that our marriage thus brought about was the reunion of two who had been a happy wedded couple in a previous state of existence on this earth? The old father himself said that the

union had been arranged and decreed by Heaven, and from this he inferred that it would be a long and a happy one. He seemed very pleased also when I accepted his invitation and took up my temporary abode with my wife in his house.

I had to wait a long time at the capital before I received a substantive appointment in the line of the public service. At last, nearly two years after my marriage, I was appointed a District Magistrate of a place in the southern part of the Island of Formosa. My father-in-law had before this decided to accept the invitation of his younger son to live with him at his official residence in Kiangsu. We accordingly took my wife's father with us on our way to Formosa, and left him in the care of his son.

We reached our destination in safety, and I was duly installed in office. It is hard to describe to you how ignorant and helpless I felt in this my first appointment. All the work of the office was quite new to me, and I could not even understand the technical terms used by the secretaries and other subordinates. Then the speech of the people was strange, and their manners and customs peculiar. There was much litigation at the yamên, and as all the statements of the parties concerned and all the evidence of witnesses had to be interpreted for me, I could never be certain that what was said before me was correctly translated. The interpreters were permanent employés who understood Mandarin and the local dialect, but they were men of indifferent

character, and they were doubtless open to bribes. In coming to decisions I had to depend much on the permanent secretaries for advice and assistance, and these men were not perfectly impartial and clean-handed.

The capital of the district, the place of my official residence, was a small walled town enclosing a hillock on which, as indeed everywhere, there was perpetual verdure of tree, shrub and herb. In this district there was only one season—a continuous hot summer; the soil was very fertile, yielding abundant crops of rice, sugar-cane, and other products; the climate was of course not good, but we were young and did not suffer.

The chief of the outdoor staff met me on my arrival, and generously gave me a loan of 2000 ounces of silver, to assist in the furnishing of my rooms and the other expenses of settling down at a new post. This kindness took me by surprise, and the surprise was increased on learning that the lender most probably did not look for repayment. Of course he reimbursed himself in time, as I ascertained, by exactions from suitors, witnesses, collectors of taxes and duties, and from every body available. But he was a fairly honest man of the class, and although I had to trust him very much both with money and important documents and information, yet he never brought me into trouble either with the people or my superiors.

My tenure of this office extended over three years,

and it was not marked by any extraordinary occurrence. In the first year of our residence at this place my wife gave birth to her first child, a daughter. She was greatly disappointed, and I had much trouble in comforting her with the hope of a man-child to follow.

From Formosa I was transferred on promotion to be Prefect in an inland part of Fuhkeen. My prefecture was a small one, where the work was not heavy and the emoluments not great. After about three years' tenure of this office I received news of my mother's death, and at once resigned and went home to keep mourning. The death of my mother distressed me very much, as I had not seen her for several years and had not received any news of her last illness. I reproached myself bitterly for not having been more filial and devoted to her, and for not having done anything to show my gratitude for all the loving care and self-denial she had bestowed on me. My mourning for her was deep and sincere, and I carried it out strictly according to old rule and custom for the full period prescribed.

When I arrived home I found that my father had aged very much since I last saw him, and that hard work and poor food had greatly weakened his constitution. My two sisters were already married, and the death of our mother left the wretched shanty in which we had all lived too miserable for my father and brothers. Moreover, the old house was now falling in ruins, so my two brothers and I persuaded

our father to go to reside with his eldest son, who had married and built a house for himself, and who wished to have our father with him. Though I had not accumulated much wealth during my period of official service, yet I was able to contribute to the comfort of my father, now in a feeble old age, and to enable him to enjoy the rest of his life without any more toil and hardship.

When the full period of mourning for my mother had expired, I reported myself as ready again for official employment. Some months afterwards I was fortunate enough to be sent to Foochow to await an acting appointment as a Taotai when a vacancy should occur in the Fuhkeen province. It was not long until such a vacancy occurred, and I was sent to take charge of a circuit in the south-west of the province. This turned out to be a very troublesome post, chiefly on account of the turbulent, quarrelsome character of the inhabitants of the country districts. Then one of the magistrates in my jurisdiction was found to have embezzled a large amount of public money, and I was obliged to suspend him and denounce him to the throne. Another district magistrate had allowed a serious charge of robbery and murder to remain uninvestigated for many months, until at last the relatives of the murdered man had been compelled to appeal to the higher authorities. In all my troubles and difficulties now, as before, my wife was my wise loving adviser and unwearied assistant. She had a clear sharp intellect, which comprehended

all the points of a case, and her judgment was always unbiassed. She invariably took infinite pains to examine into the particulars of any matter submitted by me for her consideration, and never desisted or gave an opinion until she had fully mastered all its details. Then she would draw up a summary, and submit to me a judgment or course of proceeding according to circumstances. I often regretted that I had not asked her advice and assistance much more freely than I did during my tenure of office in Formosa.

In the meantime a son had been born to us, and my wife thought that her reproach as a wife and mother had been wiped away. Taking all circumstances into consideration, we were a fairly happy and fortunate household for a Taotai in a large district hard to be governed.

In the fourth year of my tenure of this office, I had again to resign to return home and go into mourning. My old father never regained health and strength, and at length he came to be confined to his room and a seat in front of the house in warm weather. Then he had to take to his bed; and after many months of illness, he passed away peaceably in the arms of his sons. I was fortunately able to be at the funeral, which, like that of our mother, was managed entirely by our old friend the monk. He had, as before, engaged a small choir of brother monks, and Buddhist prayers and exorcisms were chanted in the house before the coffin was removed

for interment. In other respects the ceremonies observed at the funeral were those prescribed by Confucian rule and custom.

My brothers and I were strict in offering the due services at the appointed times to our father, and we complied punctiliously with all the requirements as to mourning. When my full period of retirement was over, I again, as in duty bound, reported myself ready for official employment. It was not, however, until many wearisome months had elapsed that, through the interference of an influential friend at court, I received an appointment. This was not to a post in Fuhkeen as I had expected, but to an important Taotaiship in the province of Chi-li. My wife and I did not lose much time in preparing for and setting out on this long journey, and we reached the place of our future residence without any mishap. This post was one with a great amount of work, but without any important annoyances or troubles. My wife continued to be my bosom friend, my true helpmate in the affairs of daily life, and my invaluable counsellor. So we with our children led quiet, happy lives, and made our little plans for the years that were to come. But fate envied us and spoiled our happy lives.

News reached us of my father-in-law's illness and afterwards of his death at his native place, to which he had been removed by his son. This son now wrote to his sister begging her to come to their home as soon as possible to help him in settling up

the family affairs, and to take over certain property left to her. My wife and I agreed that she should comply with her brother's request, and she accordingly left me, taking with her our youngest child, a daughter. She arrived safely at the seaport, and there she embarked in a vessel sailing for Shanghai.

This was the first time since our marriage that we were separated for more than a few days, and, alas! it was the last time. About four months after my wife left me, news came that the vessel in which she sailed had perished in a heavy gale, and that all on board had been drowned, so I never saw my wife again.

My house was now sad and lonely, and it was a great relief to me to be transferred from this post to the charge of another circuit in the same province. I remained at this new post for three years without incurring censure or having any official misfortune, and then I was transferred to Kueichow, first as Lieutenant-Governor and afterwards as Governor. This province in the best of times is always a hard one to rule, mainly on account of the very mixed nature of the population, Chinese and aborigines. But this was the time of the great troubles caused by the long-haired (Taiping) rebels and the invasion of our country by the Western barbarians, and the whole province of Kueichow was in a state of more than usual disquiet. Within its bounds the people rose at several places and on various occasions, and made angry demonstrations against the Roman

Catholic missionaries and the native Christians. Some chapels and schools and other buildings belonging to the missions were burned or demolished, and the native Christians were driven from home and property. The heads of the foreign missions were generally very unreasonable and overbearing, and the native Christians told false stories to the missionaries which the latter always believed, and on which they took action. The people became exasperated both with the missionaries and the converts, and believing them to be connected with the Long-haired rebels, proceeded to wreak their wrath on all. The local officials directly concerned, such as the district magistrates, together with all the subordinates, messengers and other servants of their establishments, were naturally in sympathy with the people, and either openly encouraged them or at least secretly countenanced them in their attacks on the Christians. Their conduct brought me into disgrace with the Viceroy, who denounced me to the throne for not taking early and vigorous measures to have the disturbances peacefully settled. The Emperor ordered me to be degraded, but as I was at the time engaged in suppressing a feud between some Chinese and a native tribe, I was retained in office for a few months until my successor arrived and took over charge.

I was then summoned to the capital to be examined with reference to the charges preferred against me by my late superior, the Viceroy of

Yunnan and Kueichow. After a long delay, a few questions were put to me, and I was required to give the Emperor an account of my proceedings in connection with the riots. In the long run I was apparently acquitted, and my conduct generally seemed to have been approved at Court. After I had an audience, my rank was restored to me, and I was appointed Governor of the important province of Honan, and ordered to proceed to my post without delay.

My duties here I soon found were too onerous for me, and the anxieties about the Yellow river and other troubles preyed on my constitution. Moreover, the climate of this place did not agree with me, and I had contracted an affection of the liver which caused me great pain. The doctors told me that the element of fire predominated in my liver, that wind prevailed in my joints and bones, and that there was too much water at my heart. The elements being thus unkindly mixed, I led an unhappy and painful life. So feeling myself growing old and my bodily and mental powers failing, and fearing that my illness was likely to be permanent, I applied, after three years' service, first for leave of absence, and afterwards for permission to return to the fields. The Emperor was graciously pleased to allow me to retire from active service, so I had my few articles of property packed up, and set off with my son and daughter for my native place here.

Several years before I gave up office, I had sent

my father and brothers enough money to buy some houses and land here for the benefit of the family. My share of the income derived from this small property is sufficient for the maintenance of me and my daughter. My son has had good luck, and is a Metropolitan Graduate. He is now at the capital, and will soon, I hope, have official employment in the provincial service. My daughter says she will never marry, and she takes the place of her mother in waiting on me. She is a good and dutiful girl, always serving me with a pleasant face and willing manner, but she is far inferior to her mother in accomplishments and all natural endowments.

I reckon myself fortunate, Elder Brother, in having been privileged to quit the land of strangers and come back to end my life in the home of my kindred and to be buried in the hills of my native place. I have only a little while, a few short years at most, to wait, and then I go home to join my fathers, and perhaps also to rejoin my wife. I have done my duty to my sovereign and to the people over whom I ruled, to my parents and to my family; I have handed over the bundle of firewood and I am now ready to withdraw quietly for ever.

But see, sir, the sun is far to the west, the day is rapidly drawing to an end and darkness will be upon us. You have some distance to travel before you reach your home, so we must be up and going. This spot we are leaving is a favourite resort of mine in the long, quiet afternoons when the weather

permits. I like to sit out here and watch the gradual coming on of sunset, to follow with my gaze the many-tinted clouds as they pass through their rapid transformations over those western hills. Sometimes these evening splendours make me inclined to believe there may be beyond the airy towers and walls and palaces which come and shine and vanish that happy Paradise of which my dead friend the Buddhist monk loved to talk. But then I know that these are only clouds of our earth and that beyond them are other hills and other plains.

Here we part, Elder Brother; you go that way. I hope we may soon meet again and meet often. Walk slowly.

Heathen and Christian

THE flood-tide had been running for some time, and a very gentle breeze from the sea was rippling the water in the harbour of one of the Southern Treaty Ports of China. It was still early morning, and the day was only breaking when our boatman began to push off from the little jetty to begin the voyage up the river. There were three boats in all, very similar in appearance, each flat-bottomed and lightly built, provided with thin white sails to hoist when there was a fair wind, and with abundance of bamboo matting to serve as awning and screening. Two of these boats were for myself and my servants and baggage, and the third had been hired by a Chinaman who, I found, was going to the village which I was to make my first stopping-place. This man's face was familiar to me, but I had not the pleasure of his acquaintance. Before we started, however, I introduced myself to him and learned from him that his name was Liong, and that he was a missionary catechist or native evangelist. He was a man, I had heard, of good reputation, much trusted and respected by all who knew him,

and regarded by the missionaries as a sincere and zealous Christian. He was now returning to his home and the sphere of his labours, and I was going on a pleasure excursion to the hilly country up the river.

We passed slowly out of the harbour, leaving the town on our right and steering our course carefully through the crowded native crafts of all kinds. The sun was rising with a great fierce glare, a glistening dew was on the boats and junks, and a soft white haze was over the river and all the objects on its banks. Outside of the town we soon passed on our left hand the quiet old village temple with its two great banyan-trees, under which even at this early hour there were a few sleepy loungers. On our right, near the ferry, we passed the ruinous but picturesque pagoda from the leafy shrubs on the top of which the Eight Brothers (Mynahs) were calling lustily. Then we were borne gently by the tide up the winding river into the beautiful rich open country, passing on for miles between great wide plains of rice now ripening for harvest. Here and there at frequent intervals on either side of the river, and not far from its banks, on small inland creeks we saw long villages, double lines of houses, each village with at least one temple conspicuous by its size, good condition, and commanding situation. Beyond the rice plains the ascent of the river is slower, and the boatmen have to use their oars or poles. We have now on either side long broad downs fringed

by rows of trees. In these parts numerous buffaloes are to be seen, some grazing quietly and others bathing with luxurious laziness in the river, and all herded by very small boys with very long sticks.

Our boats were made fast soon after sunset each day, and I had a little chat with Mr. Liong, whom I found a pleasant fellow-traveller, sociable and intelligent. On our third day from the port we arrived at a spot on the right bank of the river where an impetuous noisy stream rushes over a bed of rounded stones to pour itself into the great river. Close to this spot is a small landing-place and here we leave our boats, and going on shore ascend the narrow path which leads up to the highway. Not far from the point of intersection of the two roads and a little above the highway stands a large substantial country house with outbuildings and farmyard, the whole surrounded by a wall or a fence.

Mr. Liong had very kindly invited me to put up at his house during my visit to this district, and I had accepted the invitation. We walked together up from the boat, and on the way I learned from him that the local name of the district was Yang-ka-tsun. This name was derived, he explained, from that of the family occupying the large farmhouse of which mention has been made. This house, he said, was the ancestral home of the Yangs, whose forefathers had come to this district about 400 years ago. The first Mr. Yang who took up his residence here was a mandarin from Honan who married a lady of

this country. He was unfortunate, and was cashiered while holding office here. So he bought a farm with a modest cottage on it and settled down to spend the rest of his life at this spot. He was fond of gardening, and he laid out and planted a pretty garden extending along the banks of a rivulet from its source at a small waterfall nearly to the cottage. In this garden he had several trees and shrubs brought from his native place, and the descendants of some of these are to be found in several parts of the district. Ever since the time of this man his descendants have kept the place, adding to it and improving the original site, and the family has long been recognised as the leading one in all this part of the country. It has always had a very good name, and it has yielded several illustrious scholars and some civil mandarins of distinction. The house has also long been noted for its strict adherence to old Confucianist ways and rules in the conduct of all the ceremonies connected with the chief events of personal, domestic, and social life. Until about two generations ago no nun or monk or priest was allowed within the gates of the establishment, nor were any Buddhist or Taoist incantations or other ceremonies allowed at a death or funeral. No member of the family, male or female, frequented any of the popular unorthodox temples of the village or town to offer worship, make prayer, or consult the oracle. The only religious services tolerated in the family were those to the ancestors, to the local

tutelary deities, and whatever other gods have from time immemorial been recognised by the State and Confucianism. Within the last few score years, however, some relaxation in these matters has secretly and gradually crept in, and the popular temples, Buddhist, Taoist, and others of the neighbourhood, are now frequented by at least some members of the family. Unrecognised gods have been consulted in trouble, and Buddhist and Taoist priests and nuns have been called in for various domestic services, but only by the female members of the household.

We had now reached Mr. Liong's house, a very unpretentious building with a little garden in front and almost hidden by trees. Our baggage arrived in due time, and I soon found myself comfortably settled in a plainly furnished bedroom. The room was pleasantly situated, and on the table in it I found a copy of the Bible in Chinese. When I met my host again I said to him that the few particulars he had told me about the Yang family had excited my curiosity, and that I should like very much to make their acquaintance and learn more about them. Mr. Liong replied that he had known the family from his childhood, and had taken a great interest in its welfare. He could introduce me to the head of the house at a convenient opportunity. He would be pleased also to tell me while I was his guest the chief circumstances relating to the family so far as they were matters of his personal knowledge. The

next afternoon, accordingly, when we had finished our simple dinner in front of the house, and had put ourselves at ease to enjoy the cool afternoon air, my host began his narrative.

The head of the house who preceded the present one, Mr. Liong said, was named An-Ku, but he was known over all this part of the country as Ta Yang. He was a man of great individuality of character, masterly and self-asserting, brooking ill any opposition to his wishes, or any interference with the lines of conduct which he prescribed. At the same time he was a man thoroughly ruled by precept and principle, generous and affectionate to his family, strict and upright in his dealings with others, but always willing to yield to wrong rather than go to law or take revenge. Though narrow-minded and intolerant he had great influence in the village and district, and took the lead in all matters affecting the local welfare.

My father and Ta Yang as boys had attended the same school, had grown up together as friends, sticking close as brothers, and they retained their friendship throughout life. My father, who had a Provincial Degree, was of a quiet, studious disposition. So he did not seek to enter the public service, but preferred the life of a teacher in his native place and among his friends. He had three sons, of whom I am the eldest, and Ta Yang had three sons, and we six were contemporary pupils in my father's school for several years.

I must now tell you something about my own history, as it is intimately connected with that of the Yang family. When I left school, being destined for business, I was apprenticed to a large oil firm in the city. After my apprenticeship was over I continued in the firm and rose to be a sort of travelling agent. While in this firm I became acquainted for the first time with some native Christians, and afterwards with a foreign missionary. My acquaintance with one of the native Christians, a teacher or catechist, ripened into a very close intimacy. This man, who was zealous and enthusiastic in his profession, seemed to take a lively interest in me, and he worked hard to make me a convert. He often read to me passages of the New Testament, explaining all the difficulties, and then he tried to induce me to accept the doctrines taught in these passages. He also gave me a copy of the New Testament, asking me to read it, and telling me that he prayed to God every day to guide me into the truth. On one occasion we found ourselves bound for the same place, a town distant about three days' journey from our place of residence, and we were happy to be companions for so long a time. On arrival at our destination we spent the night, which was to be our last one for a time, together as usual, our sleeping mats being spread side by side. Before we lay down the catechist read aloud a chapter of the Gospel and prayed with me, and after we had gone to bed he went on to plead with me that I would become a Christian.

When he ceased I lay awake meditating on what he had been saying and arguing with my own mind. After I thought he had fallen asleep I heard him still whispering prayer to God to change my heart and lead me to see the truth as it is in Christ. Next morning we parted, and I still continued a staunch Confucianist. But my friend's serious earnestness in his efforts to convert me led me to think, and I read the book he had given me, and meditated much every day over all he had said. The result was that in the course of a year or so I was led to renounce Confucianism and accept Christianity. Before this occurred my father had unfortunately died of a long and painful illness, and my mother did not survive him long. The loss of my parents made me indifferent to success in business, and soon after I was received into the Church. I gave up business, and became a diligent methodical student of my new religion. Then, in the course of a few years, the missionaries engaged me to devote myself to the work of teaching the religion to my fellow-Chinese.

As I have stated, Ta Yang had three sons, the eldest by his wife and the others by a concubine. He had also three daughters, of whom, however, I saw and knew little. They were all well married, and went to live in distant parts of the country. Of the boys, the second on leaving school went into a merchant's office in the city, and from that was transferred to another place in the next province, so that I lost sight of him. But with the other sons,

especially with the youngest, I kept up the intimacy of our early boyhood. This youngest son, who was generally called Ah-Mei, was a gentle, delicate youth, eager for knowledge and a great lover of Nature. His father had intended to have him trained up for the State Examinations, and hoped to see him bring glory on the family as a great scholar and official. But as Ah-Mei grew up it became painfully apparent that he had not health and strength to bear the mental excitement and the continued strain of the work necessary to fit him to compete successfully for the State degrees. He was consequently allowed to read what he liked, and to rove about at pleasure among the hills and dales of which he was so fond. As I have told you, I was much attached to him, and when I became a convert to Christianity and felt it my duty to teach it to others, I resolved to try and bring him to be a Christian. He was eighteen years of age when I first began to talk with him on the subject and to give him Christian books to read. He was strongly prejudiced against our religion, not on conviction—for indeed he knew nothing about it—but merely from the talk of his father and other enemies of Christianity. But for some of the tenets of the religion when stated to him he immediately conceived a decided aversion, because to him they appeared unreasonable or immoral. After talking with him very much and without making any apparent good impression, I induced him one Sunday to attend a religious service at which one of the foreign

missionaries was to officiate. This missionary had lived many years among our people, and knew much about our beliefs and superstitions. He spoke the language also better than the other missionaries, and he preached simple, persuasive sermons. Young Ah-Mei was much impressed with the sermon and with the conversations which he had with the missionary and with an old native preacher. But it was not for more than a year afterwards that he told me he had become convinced of the truth and excellence of our religion, and had made up his mind to seek admission to the Church. Then, in the course of a few weeks I had the pleasure of seeing him openly admitted and hearing him profess himself a Christian.

The news of Ah-Mei's open secession irritated and distressed his parents very much. His father became violently enraged, and vowed to avenge himself on me and the missionaries. He threatened also in the first burst of his temper to disown Ah-Mei, drive him from the house and leave him to starve. But gradually parental affection and the entreaties of the boy's mother prevailed, and the son was grudgingly allowed to profess and practise his new religion at home. The father consoled himself with the hope that his son would soon grow tired of the foreign heresy and return to the old paths. He abused the religion to him, warning him that he would soon find it full of wild extravagances and teaching doctrines subversive of private morality and social order. All missionaries were in the mean-

time forbidden the house, and every effort was made to recall the youth to his early ways. But he had become a Christian and he was to remain one for life.

His life, however, was not to be a long one. About eighteen months after his admission to the Christian communion a severe cold, acting on a weak and sickly constitution, brought Ah-Mei to what proved to be his deathbed. His own mother and his father's wife were most assiduous in their attentions, nursing the sick youth with fond, devoted care. The pain which racked the patient, and which they could do little to alleviate, was dreadful for them to contemplate. But the father was more distressed than any other member of the family, though he sternly suppressed all expression or indication of his sufferings. He came into the sick-room from time to time, and stood in silence watching his little son and listening to his talk. It was terrible for the father to see his darling son meekly bearing pain for which there was no remedy, to observe him grow daily weaker and worse, and to watch the rapid coming on of the "great limit." But it was still more painful for him to hear the dying one declare his faith in a strange religion and his happy trust in its promises, and to listen to him as he even tried to persuade his father to give up Confucianism and embrace Christianity.

Ah-Mei had a short but very painful illness, which he bore with a patience and good-humour that nothing

could disturb. It was one day near the end, and death's finger was laid on his brow, when he saw his father standing by the bedside and regarding him with a look of intense sorrow. Turning his face and looking into his father's eyes with a sad, earnest look, he said, "Father, I have been an unprofitable, undutiful son, and have caused you much pain and disappointment, but it was our Heavenly Father's will that I should become a Christian, and it is His will that I leave you now. You will by-and-by forgive me all the trouble and disappointment I have caused you, and you will think kindly of the religion after I am gone, will you not? Now we part, but we may meet again hereafter, for I go to a new life, a holy, spiritual life which will never end. If I can I will pray for you in that new life, and you will perhaps be led to see that the Christian is the true religion and so put your faith in its doctrines. For me now, father, as for all who believe death has no horrors, there is nothing in it to shrink from or hate. I fall asleep now and awake to be for ever with God and His holy ones. Don't be angry with me, father, and let us meet again to be for ever together, father and son." The father could not speak, but he laid his hand for an instant on his son's head and then left the room.

A very few days after this Ah-Mei passed away, and the father followed his young son to the grave, his head bowed with a double sorrow. In accordance with the dying request of his son a missionary had

been allowed to come to the house and to conduct the religious service there and at the grave. The father would not speak to the missionary, and he would not attend the service, but he allowed all the funeral ceremonies to be carried out as his son had desired. He came back, and next day and afterwards he went about his business as usual, and mixed with friends and acquaintances as before. But the silent hopeless sorrow for his lost son passed into all his being, and the anguish which he could conceal from others was gnawing at his own vitals.

One day, shortly after the burial of the youngest son, I was surprised by a request from his eldest brother asking me to have a talk with him about the Christian religion. We had already on several occasions conversed at length on this subject, but there was never any sign of an inclination on his part toward our religion. On the contrary, it sometimes seemed that my friend had insuperable difficulties in accepting our religion, and that several of its theoretical and practical doctrines were actually repulsive to him. Moreover, he had, like most of us, a great reluctance to break with old ways of thought and action, and he was also very unwilling to cause his father any more pain and distress. So I gladly complied with the request now made, and had a long conversation with him, trying again to persuade him of the reasonableness of Christianity. At parting I gave him some books to read, and I prayed fervently that the Spirit of God might lead him to see and

accept the truth. We had many talks soon afterwards and much friendly discussion about the teachings of the Bible and the missionaries. At length, after many months' hesitation and consideration, he told me that he had come to the conclusion that he must give up Confucianism and take refuge in Christianity. His wife became converted about the same time, and in due course he and she were openly admitted as members of the Church. Before this ceremony took place they had both been recognised by the missionaries and the senior members of the Church as sincere believers in Christ and intelligent followers of His religion.

Although Ta Yang must have been to some extent prepared for the defection of his eldest son, yet when it was openly declared it seemed to give him a terrible shock. The old man was now enfeebled by ill-health and misfortune; and he had become suspicious about this son's steadfastness in orthodoxy ever since the death of his young brother. But he hoped that the early lessons, the example of home, and the prospect of future duties and honour would prevail. Now he saw all his hopes dashed, his teachings set aside, and all his future, living and dead, utterly spoiled. At first he tried threats and reproaches to make his son give up the new strange religion. When these failed, father and mother tried coaxing and reasoning with sad appeals to feelings of filial piety. But the young man had made up his mind and taken his course deliberately, and nothing could now make him go

back. He explained to his father that he had not taken the step rashly, but only after long deliberation, and that it was not from any mere desire of novelty or liking for what was foreign that he had gone over to Christianity. He also assured his old father that the change in religion would not affect his duty as a son, for he would still continue to serve and cherish his parents as hitherto and with higher motives and aims than before. He also implored his father to bear with him and forgive him, and to learn for himself the principles of the Christian religion.

When Ta Yang's son and wife were received openly into the Church, the Rev. Timothy Hope, one of the senior missionaries, came to our village to perform the ceremony. I took advantage of his presence to have him introduced to the father, hoping that he would be able to soothe the latter and perhaps bring him to tolerate at least, and ultimately accept, our religion. Mr. Hope had been known by appearance and repute for some time to Yang and the other residents in our district. He was a man of middle size, rather thin and sallow, with a long beard. His nose was tilted up at the tip, he had large soft blue eyes, and his face was usually solemn and mournful. His costume never varied. He had always a great sun-hat, black clothes, white shoes, and he was never without a large white umbrella. He had a peculiar walk, taking long steps and lurching to left and right alternately as he progressed. Altogether his appearance and manner were novel and interesting in our

villages, and the people generally had a kindness for him. The little boys, it is true, said rude, naughty things to him, and when they were on an elevation at a safe distance they called names and even threw small stones. But Mr. Hope went on his way unmoved by any of these things, and he only tried to coax the boys to decent conduct by kind, gentle words.

Mr. Hope, having been introduced to Ta Yang, went to call on the latter one day and found the old man sitting as usual on a bench in front of his house. He had been in failing health for some time, and he was no longer capable of the active life he had been accustomed to lead. Moreover, the defection of his two sons from the faith and ways of their fathers had pierced his heart and left a deep incurable wound: and his sorrow for his youngest-born was a corroding grief made worse as time passed by constant moody despondings. He saw that the end was coming, not only of his life, but also—and this was far worse—of the long, hitherto unbroken, succession of solemn ancestral services. His mind was brooding on these matters when Mr. Hope came up and addressed him with the customary greeting. Sitting down on the bench beside Yang the missionary proceeded to talk about the weather and the crops, and then about the family. Coming to the death of the young son, Mr. Hope asked the old man whether the happy peaceful ending of this son did not show him that there was a superhuman excellence in the Christian religion.

"No," replied Yang, "not at all. It was not your religion nor your books which made my little son good and made his end peaceful. He was always good, and he would have had a happy departure if he had never seen you or your books, or heard of your doctrine. I wish with all my heart that the lad had never seen anything of your books or heard anything of your religion."

"No doubt," rejoined Mr. Hope, "your son would in any case have had a calm and peaceful death, but without the Gospel he would not have had the cheering hope of an immortal life of perfect happiness in heaven."

"What is the immortal life of which you talk?" asked Yang. "Is it not an idle dream? Have not our alchemists and mystical philosophers for thousands of years tried every art to find it, and all in vain? Poets and priests have feigned that there are immortals, but it is a fiction; there is no life for evermore, whether on the misty mountain-tops of China, the fabled isles of the ocean, or heaven. Nor is there such a place of joy as this heaven or such a place of woe as your hell. These were invented long ago by Western barbarians and taught by them to the people of this country. There is no heaven but the happiness you make by a good life, and no hell beyond the misery you bring on yourself by wrongdoing."

"But consider for a little, sir," Mr. Hope replied. "There may be a real heaven and a real hell, though

different from what we understand by the words. Moreover, it does not follow that because erring men have feigned heavens and hells, therefore the heaven and hell revealed by God to man in the Bible are also fictions. We see that in this world sin often goes unpunished and virtue unrewarded, and the Bible, which is God's teaching, tells us heaven is a place of reward for those who, believing in Jesus, have lived piously and righteously; and that hell is a scene of punishment for those who lead ungodly lives, refusing to believe in Jesus as the eternal Son of God, who came into the world to redeem man. There is, believe me, sir, an abiding comfort in this wholesome doctrine."

"I will not have the comfort," replied Yang; "nor will I believe in your doctrines. What reason or justice is there in making belief in Jesus as God a merit entitling one to heaven, and disbelief or doubt in Him a demerit consigning one to eternal punishment? Moreover, you talk of Jesus as the Son of God, and again you say that Jesus was God come into the world in human form to redeem man. You say God was born of an unmarried girl in Judæa, that he lived there for thirty-three years doing great miracles, and that He was crucified on the demand of His own people. We read of Shang Ti, who you say is your God, in our old canonical books, but there is no mention of him having come down to earth and lived there as a man. Then why did he descend into such a small insignificant country as Judæa, instead of

making his appearance in our country, where he had been worshipped for ages by our great Emperors? But all the teachings of your religion are wild and reckless, apt indeed to gain over the lewd and unstable, but repulsive to men of reason brought up in Confucianism."

"My friend," said the missionary, "the teachings of the Bible are beyond your understanding now, and they cannot be accepted and believed intelligently without the work of God's spirit preparing the heart. It is now late and the sun is setting, so I must be going. I pray that the Heavenly Father will open your eyes and lead you into the truth, and I hope I may live to receive you among us. You will find the morality of our religion good and all its doctrines sober and rational. Please sit still. We meet again."

Mr. Yang's health continued to fail slowly but surely, and by degrees he gave over the management of the household and property to his eldest son. The latter gave much satisfaction to his father by the diligent attention he devoted to his affairs, and the desire to please and serve his parents which was manifest in all his conduct. He always consulted his father about any change or any important matter connected with the property. The father liked this, and had great delight in talking with his son about the plans and proposals suggested for his opinion and decision. The old man sometimes forgot that his son was a renegade, that he had left Con-

fucianism to become like a brute without the sense of right and wrong. But oftener he comforted himself with the hope that the strayed one would yet come back to the old paths of his forefathers. This hope was shared by the mother to some extent, but she did not look on her son's conversion to Christianity with the deep pain and horror which it caused her husband. She was a great believer in Kuan-yin P'usa and in certain local deities of repute, in whom her husband had no belief and for whom he had no regard. She resorted frequently to the temples of the more popular of these deities, and spent money freely among the monks and temple attendants. When she saw her husband lose health and strength from day to day she began to fear that she might soon be left a lonely widow. So she visited her favourite temples more frequently than before, prayed for her husband's restoration to health, and consulted the various oracles as to the outcome of his illness. On these visits to the temples, Mrs. Yang was generally accompanied by the faithful concubine, who also prayed and offered worship. The husband had a strong fixed dislike to these proceedings, and he would not listen to any answer from any oracle, nor could he be induced to take any medicine prescribed by the divinity.

In the course of a few weeks the missionary, Mr. Hope, paid another visit to Ta Yang, and was cordially received. The conversation soon led by a natural course to the subject of religion, and the

missionary remarked to his host that the two systems of Christianity and Confucianism did not seem to him to be mutually exclusive; he said that Confucianism was good as a system of practical philosophy, but that as a system of religion there were deficiencies in it which needed to be supplemented by the fuller teachings of Christianity. The former, he said, had little or nothing, for example, about God and man's relation to Him, and nothing about a future existence—at least nothing definite and authoritative.

Mr. Yang promptly denied that there were deficiencies in Confucianism, and maintained that the teachings of the system were sufficient for all the wants of life. "Is it not enough for us," he said, "to know how to live aright in this world, to know our duties to others and how to perform them? Though we should spend all our life in learning, yet we could not come to know perfectly what man and life are and mean, and even the sages have been unable to master the task. Why, then, should we waste time in vain guessings and idle dreams about a life hereafter with heavens of reward and hells of punishment? Confucianism teaches us to be good, obedient subjects to our rulers, pious children to our parents, just and affectionate as parents, punctilious but considerate as husband and wife, kind brothers, and faith-keeping friends. These are duties which birth and inevitable circumstances render imperative, and to carry them out thoroughly is the absorbing busi-

ness of a lifetime. If a man neglects his duty in these matters he suffers, and if he fulfils it he has a reward either personally or in his posterity."

Mr. Hope agreed, but he tried to show Mr. Yang that beyond and higher than all this was man's paramount duty to serve God and worship Him, believing in Jesus Christ as God incarnate for man, and in the Holy Spirit as God's deputy in the world.

But Mr. Yang could not listen with patience to the missionary's doctrines. He ridiculed the story of the incarnation as a figment, derided the inexplicable fancy of the "three-one subtle body," and the curious idea of the resurrection of the dead, some to bliss but many to misery. Mr. Hope, seeing he was not making progress, gave Mr. Yang a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel and bade him good-bye.

Old Yang continued to fail more and more, not suffering very much pain but gradually wasting away, and it became apparent to his family that the end was approaching. He knew and felt this himself, and he spoke often of his death, talking of it as a natural event for which he was fully prepared. He had long conversations daily with his son as long as his strength was sufficient, and he still liked to be consulted on matters relating to the property. When he saw that his life must soon come to an end, he gave his son minute and careful instructions about the treatment of his body after death. It was his especial desire, his urgent request, that in spite of the requirements of his son's new religion, old rule

and custom should be followed in all the formalities and solemnities connected with the laying out of the body and with the burial. "I do not want," he said on several occasions, "any Buddhist monks or Taoist priests to chant prayers or incantations in the house or at the funeral, and I forbid all Christian prayers and religious services. I am to be buried as a Confucianist."

One day, thinking his end very near, old Yang made his son stand close beside him, and spoke to him for a long time to this effect: "My son, I have led a fairly good life, and though I have fallen far short of the virtues of my fathers, yet if it be true that I am indeed to meet them in the gloomy world below the springs, I can stand up before them unabashed. I served my parents faithfully up to their deaths, I buried them with pious observance of every rite and ceremony, and I have never failed in the solemn daily service of remembrance at home or in the periodical worship at their tombs. As to my neighbours, I have always tried to live at peace and in harmony with them, acting righteously in all my dealings with them, and often making surrender of what I deemed my just rights in order to avoid ill-feeling and litigation. I have also tried to regulate my household and bring up my children according to the rules and customs of my forefathers. Here, however, my fate has been bad, and I have not succeeded. My little son, your youngest brother, left the right way in which he had been led by me and took to the new foreign religion.

He might have repented and reformed if he had lived, but it was his destiny to die young. You, too, my eldest son, the hope and stay of my life, my successor to the property and to all the solemn duties of headship, you too have turned your back on all I hold right and good—on all I esteem and reverence as sacred and binding. You will not lead the juniors of the family to the hills in the spring nor burn incense before the tablets of ancestors here at home. Doing away with all the worship to your dead, you will lessen the family affection and slight your forefathers. But let us not say anything more on this painful subject. My little lad, I know that except in this matter of religion you have always been a good and filial son to me, and I am confident you will be such to me when I cease to exist. It is sad, inexpressibly sad, to think and know that there will be no daily service for me here in the house in which I have spent a long life, no visits of pious worship to my tomb when the due season comes round. Still, my little son, you will not quite forget me, but you will often think of me, I know. You will go sometimes to see my tomb and place new sods on it, and keep up as many of the old ways as you can for your father's sake. You will be kind also to your mother, who has been to me a devoted, obedient wife, except that she would go to worship and ask guidance from strange gods. But let her have her way in this matter now, as it pleases and comforts her and does not harm any one. You, my son, will take my place

in the meetings of the elders of the district when they hold council to deliberate on matters of common interest. You should be their leader and president, for you have more sense and knowledge than any among them; but as you are known to have become a heretic they may refuse to be guided by your advice or to follow your leading."

The end came on slowly. Mr. Yang had caused his bed to be placed in the proper room facing south, and with his head to the east. This "changing of the mat" showed that he knew his death was near. The old man, however, remained as self-possessed and as calm and clear in mind as ever. I had gone into the room with the son for my last time to see Mr. Yang and bid him farewell. The old man heeded me little, and motioned for his son to come up close to him. Then taking his hand he said, "Little son, you see how peaceful my end is. I feel my vital powers failing moment by moment. I am dying; but what is it to die, little lad? Nothing. Soon my last breath will pass, and with it I pass away from you and life. My body will go back to mother earth, and my spirit will sooner or later rejoin the ethereal elements of the universe. It may be that when set free from the body, my spirit may fondly linger for a time here or near the tomb in which its former home lies buried. It will not trouble you or any one, however, and it will gradually vanish for ever. The fragrance of my name, too, may survive for a while in our little district, for I have tried to be just and

generous to all, helping the poor and succouring the oppressed as I had power and opportunity. I am tranquil and happy as my last moment is coming, and I have no fears and no regrets. You have assured me that you will bury me with all the rites and ceremonies with which my forefathers were buried, and so I can close my eyes in calm peace when the time comes, and softly fall asleep for the night which is eternal."

At the supreme moment Mr. Yang was extremely weak and utterly exhausted. He lay very quiet, half dozing and half awake; there was a dim light in the room and a deep stillness. His son, who spent nearly all his time by his father's bedside, was the only other person in the room. The dying man looked wistfully into his son's face, as if seeking for an explanation of something which had aroused his attention.

"What is it, father?" said the son.

"Did you hear that noise of singing and laughing as if of glad children at their play? No? I hear it clearly. And don't you see that light before me in the east? Let me go to the children and the light, little son."

The change came and the spirit departed. A few hours afterwards I went in to see the body and bid it the last farewell. I was deeply moved by the calm, peaceful look which the face had assumed, and by the great resemblance which it now bore to that of the youngest son.

Ever since the death of Ta Yang his son has ruled

in the house and over the property. He is the only man of position in the whole district who is a Christian, but he has not the ambition and the love of pre-eminence which his father had. He is modest and unassuming, attends closely to business, but takes part in the village councils, and helps in all good works which do not require a sacrifice of principle. The memory of the stern old father still survives, and many contrast him with his son to the disadvantage of the latter as a public man. But it is not easy for a Chinese like Yang to be a consistent Christian and at the same time be more than tolerated by his neighbours. The people generally hate the religion, despise their fellow-countrymen who join it, and persecute those among them who propagate its teachings. Let us hope, however, that Yang will outlive the dislike to him on account of his religion, and that his fellow-countrymen will all soon come to trust and respect him as a good and public-spirited neighbour.

The Fate of the Wicked Mandarin

I AM happy to meet you, Reverend Sir, and I hope you will allow me to have your company as far as we travel the same road. You are going back, I see, from your morning rounds to your monastery, and I am on my way to visit a friend who lives at the foot of the hill over the ridge beyond. We have the company of this bright, clear stream nearly to the place where our paths diverge. How it runs and leaps with merry prattle, tumbling over jutting stones and flowing past soft green nooks as it hurries on to pay its tribute to the great river!

How light and refreshing the air is out here this morning! The blue sky is unflecked by clouds save over there in the east, where a few soft white masses of vapour are slowly passing away. The atmosphere, clear and bright, seems full of life and briskness, and everything tells us of the longed-for return of spring. See how on either side of the path the willows wave in the moving air with their burden of soft catkins, and farther off on the lower slopes of the hills the garden fruit-trees blow with blooms of red and white. The wild flowers have budded and some are in

blossom, and all the herbage has a fresh, green appearance. How earnestly the turtle-dove coos its sad appeal, and tells the listening husbandman of coming rain! Ever and anon, too, there comes the cuckoo's loud, clear note, the summons for the sowers to come out into the fields and sow. And now as we ascend you can hear the noisy chattering of the pairing grackles, and farther away the partridge's warning call to his brother. Is it not strange, Mr. Monk, how birds and beasts obey the strong, gentle impulses of Nature, and how in due season some of them warn or encourage man?

Quite so, Reverend Sir. It is not strange to you who see in all living creatures possible embodiments of past or future human beings. You hold, I know, that what is now a bird or a beast may once have been a human being, and that it may become such again after death in another birth in this world. All that we are and suffer or enjoy here, you say, is the result of conduct in a previous state of existence, and what we do here, you tell us, will bear fruit not necessarily, or not only in this life, but certainly in one to come hereafter. We who are Confucianists, however, cannot accept this teaching. We hold that in one and the same life man sows and reaps; that the evil-doer provokes his own punishment here, and the virtuous man here heaps up his own reward; and that "Heaven, as an invariable rule, blesses the good and blasts the dissolute."

Your correction is right, Mr. Monk. The rule is

not "invariable," at least so far as human powers of observation extend. We do indeed sometimes find, as you argue, that the wicked man prospers by his wrongdoing, and dies in peace and comfort, leaving his children to inherit his ill-gotten gains. But we must remember that we do not know all the circumstances of our neighbours' lives, and that the man who seems to flourish and be prosperous may be actually plagued and miserable. Moreover, there is this to add, that Heaven, according to our notions, may defer the punishment of a man, and visit his guilt on his children or grandchildren. Still the cases which we see of retribution overtaking the man who leads a notoriously bad life are so frequent, that we are justified in believing that generally virtue has its reward and vice its punishment in the present life.

Let me relate to you an instance, many of the details of which came within my own knowledge. We are now at the top of the ascent, and near the point at which our ways part. We can rest for a time on this low stone which lies in the shadow of the hill behind, and commands a view of the long winding plain below. The sun is still in the east, and you will be back in your monastery in time for your forenoon meal after hearing my story. It is this.

Many years ago a man named Wu, a native of Hiongshan, in the province of Kuangtung, settled in Koku, a town on the Peiho, a few miles below Tientsin. Mr. Wu here, in process of time, became the owner

of a large establishment, in which "millet wine" was made and sold. On his death the business passed to his only son, in whose hands it grew and prospered greatly. This man had been married to the daughter of a rich merchant of Tientsin, and he had become the father of a large family. He was most attentive to business, cautious though enterprising, and he had accumulated a large fortune.

Of Mr. Wu's children five were boys, and these all received an ordinary school education in their native place. But no one of them showed any inclination to extend his studies or aim at distinction as a scholar or an official. They were all taught to look on the acquisition of riches as the great object of life and to regard everything from the money point of view. The parents inculcated the necessity of the pursuit of wealth by precept and example, and their children proved themselves apt pupils. They never squandered money with their school-fellows on the tempting delicacies of the streets, and they never played at pitch-and-toss or any other gambling game. They handled their pocket-money "cash" with great care, keeping count of them and trying to have them all of the proper size.

When the boys left school they all went into business, and were in due time provided with wives. The father had wanted one of them to compete at the State Examinations and obtain a Government appointment. He was willing to spend a large sum of money in teachers, bribes, and charitable

contributions in order to have a member of the family a mandarin or at least a graduate. He had been disappointed to find that as they grew up all his sons turned to business and did not seem to care for the glory and dignity of a public official. So he was very much delighted when his youngest son, Tao-ts'ai, who had been taken into his own establishment, turned out to be incompetent and to be disinclined to the constant diligence and attention required by a mercantile career. This young man expressed a desire to leave business and become a mandarin, and his father gladly encouraged and helped him to carry out his desire. It was not, however, for the sake of the distinction which office would confer that Mr. Tao-ts'ai wanted it, nor for the honour it would bring to the family. He regarded official employment merely as a sure and tolerably safe way of making a large fortune within a few years and without any great toil or hardship. His sole ambition was to amass an enormous sum of money and then retire to the native place of his family. There he would spend the rest of his life, adding to his fortune by investments and gaining power and influence for his children among his neighbours. Thus he would make his sons and daughters rich and prosperous and have them married in the best families of the country.

The father willingly engaged a good tutor to coach Tao-ts'ai for the examination for the first degree, and the tutor had hard work. In due time,

however, his pupil entered and passed. It was rumoured at the time that he did not enter the Examination Hall and that he was personated by a paid professional substitute. This may or may not have been the case.

Soon after Tao-ts'ai became a graduate, his father gave a large sum of money in his name as a contribution to a Famine Relief Fund under Government management. He also paid in the name of his son several thousand ounces of silver for the purchase of a button and an official appointment for him as District Magistrate. The father also supplemented these payments by large bribes and gratuities to the secretaries and other employés of the yamêns. It was not, however, until after a wearisome delay of many months that at last the rank of a District Magistrate, together with a substantive appointment, rejoiced the impatient purchaser.

The post which young Mr. Wu obtained was that of Magistrate of a District in the Prefecture of Hangchow. Thither he proceeded at once with his family, consisting of his wife and two children and several retainers, including a young slave girl whose name was Little Willow. As I have stated, Tao-ts'ai's only ambition in taking office was to enrich himself speedily. So as soon as he arrived at his post and was duly installed he began to inquire about the possibility of his making a fortune during his tenure of office. This he calculated would extend over

three or four years, but not much longer. His character and designs soon became known to all the rapacious employés of the yamên, and in them the magistrate saw he would find willing and useful instruments. When he assumed charge several of these underlings gave him large sums of money under the customary euphemism of loans, and having done this they felt free to practise extortion for themselves at pleasure. Their chief used them freely in his own acceptance of bribes and in the exaction of money for himself from the parties to suits in his court, and generally from all who in any way came within his power.

Mr. Wu used this power in every unjust and tyrannical manner, oppressing the weak, robbing the rich, and selling pardon and protection to dangerous evildoers. Let me tell you one or two cases as examples of this mandarin's iniquitous conduct as a magistrate. These will show you how unprincipled and unscrupulous he was in his official proceedings. A coffin-maker and timber-merchant in the chief town of the district had a disagreement about a large quantity of valuable timber. The dispute was taken to the magistrate's court, each party having to pay heavy fees or "squeezes" before the case could be considered. When the magistrate had heard the two sides he professed himself unable to decide the case without seeing the timber in dispute. So with the consent of the owner he ordered the timber to be brought into his yamên. When it was safely

lodged there he confiscated the entire lot on the pretext that it had been illegally obtained. The two parties to the suit were dismissed, and the timber was given over to a rich and influential apothecary in payment of a large loan which he had made to the mandarin.

Another instance of this official's reckless injustice and unscrupulous extortion became notorious. A rich man of the district died, leaving a large property in houses and land and all his money to his two sons. The father had expected and desired that the two brothers should keep the property undivided, and should live together as before on the spacious premises which formed the home of the family. After the father's death the elder son wished to comply with his request, and so for some time the two brothers continued to live together, having all things in common. But the younger brother, who was somewhat of a simpleton, listened to the talk of his wife, and about three years from the father's death insisted on having an equal division of all the property. The elder brother reluctantly consented, and all the houses, land, and money were distributed equally between the two brothers. But the younger even then was not satisfied, and complained that he had been treated unfairly in the division. At the instigation of his wife and some busybodies who throve by the litigation of others, but against the advice of his relatives, he took his complaint to the magistrate. As you know, it is

disreputable for brothers to have a lawsuit about family matters, and so when the case came into court the mandarin knew he could go to great lengths with impunity. From the plaintiff he exacted 2000 ounces of silver on the presentation of his petition, and a similar sum was required from the defendant. When the case came on for hearing and judgment it soon became apparent that the elder brother had acted fairly and had made an equal division of all things. Thereupon a new accusation was trumped up against him in the yamên, and he was charged with being a member of a traitorous secret society. He was now put in the inner prison among the vilest and most abandoned criminals. Here he suffered great pain and misery, not only at the hands of his gaolers, but also from the older prisoners. He was stripped of his clothes, robbed of his sleeping-mat, and cruelly tortured. He had to depend on his own family to bring money to appease his tormentors and to supply him with food and clothing. But the older relatives had become exasperated, and they threatened the younger brother with all kinds of dreadful penalties if he did not obtain the release of his elder brother without any delay. So the former had to go again before the magistrate, confess his guilt, declare the innocence of the accused, and pray for his release. The magistrate knew that he could not detain his prisoner very long, but he insisted on having 5000 ounces of silver before he would allow the case to be

settled. This sum was soon collected, and the two brothers went to their respective homes utterly impoverished and bitter enemies for life.

This was the best haul the magistrate had, but there were other large cases out of which he obtained heavy payments. Then he had bribes for various kinds of monopolies, hush-money for murders, enormous fines levied from defaulting taxpayers, and various other items of unlawful exaction. To these should be added the large sums of Government money which he embezzled, defrauding the revenue in a daring, persistent manner.

Mr. Wu was careful to remember the birthdays of the Governor and certain other high officials, and of the Governor's mother who lived with her son, and he always sent acceptable presents of considerable value. He also managed to keep on good terms with the military authorities, and he was fortunate in not having any great plague or disaster. So he was allowed to hold office for about five years, and then the death of his mother obliged him to resign.

When the period of mourning was over, Mr. Wu did not seek for a reappointment, but retired with his family to the native place of his ancestors in Hiong-shan. Here he bought a piece of land not far from the city and near the river. There was one old dwelling-house on this site, but Wu took it all down except the walls, and these he enclosed in his new house, which was very large and had two storeys. The upper storey was all of wood, with glass windows

to the rooms and a narrow verandah on every side. The verandah was enclosed by a lattice-work frame furnished with small half-doors of venetian blinds. In front, facing the river, the house had two large reception-rooms without any communication between them, one being reserved for the males and the other for the females of the family.

At this time Mr. Wu's establishment consisted of his wife and two concubines, one son and three daughters, and two male and four female servants. Of these last one was the young slave-girl, Little Willow, who was now about fourteen years of age. This girl was very good-looking, very simple, and ignorant, but of an amiable disposition, very gentle and patient. She was supposed to be a daughter of parents who had once been in affluence and honour, and had been ruined by opium-smoking and other kinds of dissipation. Her mistress was jealous and suspicious of her and treated her with abominable cruelty. When irritated or annoyed by some trivial mistake, or act of carelessness on the part of the girl, Mrs. Wu flogged her unmercifully with a stick. Sometimes she beat her with a hot iron rod, or ploughed with her thumb-nail a hole in her face, and not unfrequently she shut the girl out all night without food or covering. Little Willow's life was a very hard and hopeless one, for, as you may know, a mistress of a household is all-powerful over her subordinates, and when she is cruel and jealous she may be very wicked and oppressive with impunity.

It is true that the other females in the household tried to mitigate the severity of the slave-girl's treatment by acts of kindness done furtively.

The house which Mr. Wu had built was a large and conspicuous one, and it was thoroughly furnished inside. The reception and bedrooms were adorned with numerous European luxuries and curiosities procured in Hong-Kong, and all the chambers above and below were lighted by kerosene lamps of various kinds. Behind the chief building were the kitchen and other outhouses, the entire premises being surrounded by a mud wall with a gate on the side towards the river.

In this house Mr. Wu hoped to live many years of ease and pleasure, and to enjoy all the comforts that riches and health and good surroundings could give. Of his neighbours, not a few had lived for many years in the United States of America, or Australia, or the Straits Settlements, and with some of these, from time to time, he readily made acquaintance. Thus intimacies grew up, and friendly and convivial meetings became frequent.

For some years matters went on very well, and no family in all the district seemed so happy and blessed as that of the ex-magistrate. It is true that all his neighbours were not on very intimate terms with the family, for some had heard evil reports of Mr. Wu and preferred to keep aloof. But most of the men liked his dinners, with morra played over the wine, and cards and opium afterwards. And it was the

great desire of Mr. Wu and his wife to make friends among the rich and prosperous families in the district, mainly with a view to future marriage alliances or other material advantages. They also paid great court to the local authorities in order to secure their countenance and assistance. Hence the civil and military officials of Hiong-shan were on very friendly terms with Mr. Wu, and often honoured his table with their presence and spent many jolly hours in his house. At New Year's time especially, there were great festivities at the Wu's house, to which some of the mandarins and their families were generally invited.

So it came to be about eight years from the time the Wu family had settled in Hiong-shan, and another New Year had brought the wonted feasting and merriment. On the 15th day of the first month a large party was given at the house, Mr. Wu entertaining the male and Mrs. Wu the female guests. The rooms were brilliantly lighted, the guests were very merry, and all enjoyed a very pleasant evening. There was abundance of good food and wine, and there were fireworks outside, and the festivities were kept up from early in the evening until about midnight. Then the guests began to leave, and the last one was away not long before one o'clock.

When the servants were clearing away the cups and plates and turning out the lamps, Mrs. Wu became enraged with Little Willow for some slip or mistake. She beat the slavey on the head and

shoulders with a wooden bar, sent her into the kitchen to stay there until morning, and ordered her to have hot water ready at daylight. The poor girl went away sobbing with anger, pain, and misery. There was no fire in the kitchen, and she had no wrapping and no companion, except the Canton dog, "Black-slave," that is, Nigger. Little Willow went into the cold, dark house, closed the door, and lit the feeble rushlight against the coming of ghosts and goblins. She then sat down in a corner among the firewood with Nigger close to her side and soon fell asleep.

In the great house the lights were all put out and all the windows and doors were seen to be carefully closed and barred. The place became still, and soon every one was fast asleep, the servants in the chambers below and the family in the rooms above.

After a short sleep Little Willow awoke and found Nigger in a state of restlessness. He was making impatient sneeze-like noises and pushing his nose up into the girl's face. She knew that he wanted something, and thinking it might be near daylight she opened the door to look out and set the dog free. But Nigger did not bark or run away, and he remained close to her side. Little Willow sat down on the doorstep, resting her head on her hands, and looked up to the sky all round to see if there were any signs of approaching daylight. She knew she was to have the hot water ready for her mistress by sunrise. While she was looking about her attention

was attracted to large black clouds rising up and hanging over the house, or floating slowly away a little distance and then falling down. Nigger continued his sneezing noises and pawed the ground impatiently, evidently wanting to be be off towards the house. The girl tried to soothe and quiet him as she watched the clouds. Were they indeed clouds? She had never seen any so thick and black, and surely she saw a bright flash of light in the house. It was smoke, clouds of smoke she was watching. Then she was startled to see how quickly the masses of smoke rose one after another, greater and greater, thicker and heavier, falling on the roof and on the ground before her. Then she saw another great flare-up in the upper storey, and heard a crash, and knew that her master's house was on fire. For a moment she sat and watched, perhaps with a natural feeling of fierce delight. But a loud, long scream piercing the air, and another, and another, made her rise and run. She rushed first to the house and knocked, shouting at the servants' doors. Then she fled, still followed by Nigger, to the road and screamed, "A fire! a fire! Save life! save life!"

Some time elapsed before any of the neighbours arrived, and the house was then completely enveloped in flames. The woodwork of the verandah was all in a blaze, and the inner windows and doors were burning fiercely. By the light of the flames some of the inmates could be seen making frantic efforts to escape but in vain, and their terrible shrieks were

heard amid the roar and rattle of the burning. The servants below had been awakened by Little Willow's knocking and shouting, and they standing outside, talking fast and loud, while devising means to break or cut a hole in the flooring which separated the upper from the lower storey. But as all this was going on and the screams of the prisoners above continued to be heard through the roar of the flames, suddenly there came an awful crash. The heavy roof, which was supported entirely by wooden pillars, had given way, and it fell with a terrific uproar, sending up great masses of dust and smoke.

As soon as it was possible workmen were engaged to remove the fallen débris and search for the bodies. It was long before the work was finished, and the blackened, disfigured bodies of the parents, concubines, and children, eight in all, were laid out side by side ready for burial.

The site of the Wu's house is now a wilderness overgrown with jungle, and no one will buy or rent it. People say that the ghosts of the dead ones haunt the place, and that the peep-peep of their piteous cries and wails is often heard at night. No one except the helpless vagrant or the hunted criminal will venture on the ground after sunset to brave the ghosts and the cruel goblins sent to dog and seize them. Outside of the ruined wall some kind persons have built a shrine for the miserable ghosts, and all who pass that way, especially in the

afternoon, stop to light a candle or burn incense or make kotow before the small tablet.

Mr. and Mrs. Wu left a bad name in the district in which they lived, and it has not passed away. When I was there lately staying in an inn, I heard some stories of their evil doings, which, though founded on fact, were greatly exaggerated.

As to Little Willow. When she saw the roof fall and knew it was all over with her mistress's family, she went aside and sat down on a stone near the wall. There she remained for some time sobbing and weeping, and feeling utterly wretched and hopeless. The only creature to sympathise with her was Nigger, and he sat beside her quiet and sorrowful. When they had been sitting thus disconsolate for some hours they were observed by a foreign missionary lady, who happening to be in the neighbourhood had come to see the damage caused by the fire. The lady went over to Little Willow, and sitting down beside her gently asked her the cause and nature of her distress. When she heard the girl's story she had pity on her, and took her and Nigger away to the mission-house. There the girl was treated with great kindness, fed, clothed, and educated, and in the course of a year or two she entered the foreign religion. After two or three years she was married to a native Christian teacher, and she is now a happy and prosperous woman with a good husband and two fine children. Her character is very good, not only among the Christians, for whom

she is a teacher of girls, but also among the orthodox women of the district.

Now, Mr. Monk, you admit that in the case of this man Wu, crime brought on its own punishment in this life, and that the retribution was complete, extending to his family and his posthumous reputation. Here surely we have a case of one who, by the accumulation of wickedness, incurs disaster which begins with himself, but does not cease with his death.

That is quite true, your Reverence. If retribution had not overtaken the Wu family before our eyes, as it were, we should still have believed that "Heaven likes to pay," and that the offender would be punished in some way, either in himself or his immediate descendants. But I cannot admit your fancy that Wu has made an evil karma which will bring further retribution in another state of existence.

Well, I am not disposed to argue your opinion that Little Willow has atoned for demerit in a former birth by becoming a slave to a bad mistress, and that previous merit released her from the state of slavery and gave her comfort and prosperity. There is no time to discuss the question, for you are eager to be at your monastery and I must hurry on to pay my visit. Here we have to part. May you become a living Buddha. *Au revoir.*

The Orphan Girl

YES, Elder Brother, you are quite right. Mêng Ho-nien and I are very good friends and we have been such all our lives. Our families, moreover, were always on terms of great intimacy, and they were united by more than one marriage. We lived in the same village, and Ho-nien and I in early childhood made mud-pies and played tip-cat together. Afterwards as boys we attended the same preparatory school, and from that went to a higher school to prepare for our first Degree. This we obtained at the same Examination, and we then went together through a further course of lessons and hard reading for the second Degree. In due time we were able to comply with all the preliminary formalities and to go up for the Provincial Examination. We had each the good fortune to take a high place, and we came back to our homes very much elated with our success. Soon after this we separated and lost sight of each other, for Mêng had to go up to Peking for his Metropolitan Degree. He had decided on entering the public service; but I had no ambition and did not feel attracted to an official life,

so I did not proceed farther, and, satisfied with the social position which my Provincial Degree gave me at home, I retired to live with my parents on our little property in the village. When I reached the proper age I was provided with a wife, who has given me a son and two daughters. With them I have led a life which has been quiet and obscure, but not unhappy.

Mr. Mêng, who was a young man of brilliant genius and great application, distinguished himself at the Peking Examinations and became a Hanlin. Some time afterwards he obtained a subordinate appointment with a trifling salary in one of the great offices of the capital. But he did not like Peking life and work, and he was very glad to be sent away as magistrate to a district in the south-east of Kuangtung. He and I have since then corresponded occasionally, but we met rarely until a few years ago.

You have been correctly informed, sir. Mrs. Mêng has a widespread reputation for her abilities and her goodness. Yes, I have seen her and met her in the Mêngs' house. She is a remarkable woman and her life has been peculiar in many respects. I can give you a short outline of it if you will have the patience to listen. It will while away the afternoon, and we can sit here on the grass under the trees. Light your pipe and have a smoke; the tea will be brought out to us presently. It is rather late in the afternoon, but the story is not a long one.

We must begin with the family from which Mrs. Mêng came. Her father was a mandarin named Ting, a native of a hamlet in the Ku-cheng district of the Hohsien Prefecture of Chih-li. This Ting's father was a rich farmer and capitalist, a clever but ignorant man of great vanity and ambition, but also public-spirited and liberal. He gave his son a good training and education, being desirous to see him enter the public service by the correct and honourable way of the State Examinations. Then he felt amply rewarded by the success of his son, who took the highest Degree and entered the stream of civil employment in a very creditable manner. In due course our Ting was provided by his parents with a wife, the daughter of an ex-official who had once held a high position.

But before this important event occurred, and indeed soon after Ting had passed his Peking Examinations, he began to suffer from some nervous affection of the heart accompanied by insomnia. The great city doctor was consulted and he prescribed certain medicines, and along with these a special diet and mode of life. But after following this doctor's instructions for some months Ting found there was little or no improvement in his health, and he went to another doctor. This latter, after hearing the patient's story and examining his pulse and general appearance, looked very wise and solemn. He then recommended Ting to smoke a pipe of opium after dinner and another before going to bed,

with an occasional pipe when there was severe pain. Ting followed this advice, and so it came to pass that at the time of his marriage he had unfortunately become a daily but a moderate smoker of opium.

About this time, above thirty-five years ago, Ting, after serving some time at the capital, obtained his first substantive appointment, that of District Magistrate in the Jaoping Prefecture of the Province of Kuan-tung. He went to this remote place of exile, as his friends considered it, accompanied by his wife and their only child, a little daughter of about six years of age.

Mr. Ting was a careless, lazy, good-natured man of excellent natural abilities, but with a passive dislike to work and worry. As soon as he had been duly installed in his new post, and had performed the necessary formal duties on taking over charge, he left all the routine work of the office to his subordinates—the secretaries, messengers, and other miscellaneous employés of a yamên. As to work, he did nothing beyond exercising a general control and supervision, often of a very perfunctory character. All lawsuits and criminal cases were delivered over to his deputies to be heard and judged by them, and he for the most part merely gave their decisions as his own. He was not personally or by disposition unjust or tyrannical, and he did not extort money or sell judgment. But he did not take measures to prevent his subordinates from using his name to assist them in the cruel and rapacious acts of which

they were daily guilty. He was too careless about the good name of his yamên and too indifferent to the interests of the people whom he had been sent to govern.

At home Mr. Ting left the management of household affairs entirely to his wife. He gave her at the end of every month all the silver received for his private purse during the month. With this the wife had to pay wages, provide food and clothing, meet all bills, and generally defray all the expenses of his private establishment. Whatever remained over Mrs. Ting stored away carefully and secretly against untoward contingencies. She was indeed a good manager and a good wife, though without any real affection for her husband, as he had none for her. She believed that the parents of Mr. Ting and herself had fulfilled her destiny in making her his wife, and she felt she had a life-long duty to perform to her husband in consequence. She recognised that she was bound to keep him in order, to look after his health and comfort, his affairs and all his interests. Like the model matrons of ancient history, she always treated her husband with ceremonious respect, and ordered her household in the strict ways of primitive simplicity. But she did not allow her passion for antique plainness and frugality to interfere with her sense of duty in seeing her husband's house well furnished and her husband well dressed and always fit to appear before his official superiors. His shoes were the best and most

fashionable from Canton, and the silk robes of his official costume always looked new and fresh. He had the best food that money and influence and forethought could procure, and the house was never without a supply of good old Shaohsing wine. There was only one item of expense in which she always showed an invincible determination not to relax in the slightest degree, and that was the item of opium. She loathed the name and the smell of the drug, and feared greatly for the consequences of possible uncontrolled indulgence. At first she had tried every means to make her husband give up his pipe, but all her arts and efforts were in vain. Then she confined herself to constant watchfulness and unwearied diligence in keeping him from going to excess. Day by day she counted out in the most grudging spirit exactly the same number of "cash" to the servant for the daily purchase of the portion of opium, and she always inspected the purchase before it passed into the smoking-room. Ting, on the other hand, never, I believe, showed symptoms of wishing to exceed, though he had now and then an extra pipe, of which the wife did not know, in the back room of the doctor's house.

Mrs. Ting often felt exercised in mind and troubled in spirit about this opium habit of her husband. There was only one other great sorrow in her life, and that was her failure to have a son. She often vexed herself with vain surmises as to the cause of this dreadful calamity, and the possibility of finding

a remedy for the defect. For the most part she took all the blame on herself, and she felt ashamed before her husband. It was he, she knew, who was the principal sufferer, for she had not given him a son to transmit the family succession, and he would have no one to offer worship at his own tomb or to his memorial tablet after his death. Mrs. Ting often lamented her guilt and misfortune to her husband, and usually finished her self-accusation by urging Ting to procure a concubine. "Father of a daughter," she would then say to her husband, "you cannot remain without a son; I am reaping the fruit of some sin in a former life in not being able to bear you one; you must seek a subsidiary wife who will make you the father of a son; I will help to seek a proper and likely person for you." But Ting always felt quite reconciled to his lot and would not hear of another woman. "We have lived together," he would say to his wife, "in peace and comfort these many years, and why should we tempt fate by bringing a strange woman—a woman of these southern barbarians—into our household? She would only be a source of trouble and misfortune, and I am not going to have one of them as a concubine; we can remain as we are, content with our little daughter."

This daughter, whom her parents called Lily, was, as has been stated, six years of age when the family went south. She was a tiny child for her years, slight and frail-looking, but really strong and healthy.

Her feet had been cramped in infancy according to Chinese custom, and she was not able to walk even a few paces without waving like a young willow. For greater distances she had to use a staff, or support herself by doors and walls. In her northern home she had very often been carried about by her father, borne on his back or riding on his shoulder. To the casual observer little Lily was at first only a commonplace, uninteresting child. Her head was rather small, her features plain, and she was painfully shy and almost stupid-looking. She had small brown eyes with fringes of dark eyelashes. Usually her eyes had a somewhat dreamy expression until some inner impulse sent into them a light which made them bright and beautiful.

Mr. Ting had taken a great pleasure in teaching his little daughter to read, write, and count. His wife objected to all this as a departure from old custom and a questionable expenditure of time and trouble. She tried to do her duty to the child by teaching her plain sewing and embroidery, the necessary art of cooking, and how to do up her hair and bandage her feet for herself. Lily, as became a dutiful daughter, gave great heed to these lessons, and pleased her mother by her attention and her quickness in learning. But the child's heart was with her father and his books and stories. The father loved her with all the love of a man who has only one creature to claim his affection. Between him and his wife there had never been anything that

could even by a liberal extension of the term be called affection. He accepted her as a matter of course, and she, as we have seen, regarded him as her fate. All the tender affection with which the father's being was endowed was given to the dear little daughter.

Fortune dealt gently with Ting, and all things seemed to be going well with him in this his first post. He had no bad year, no great drought, and only one season of excessive rain, so there was no great or general distress in his district. There was no popular outbreak within his jurisdiction, and there were no great robberies or murders, nor any serious crimes of more than local interest. The land taxes and other contributions due to government were collected regularly and paid punctually to the proper authorities.

At home also all things continued to go smoothly, and if Ting ever reflected on his lot he must have deemed himself a happy man. His wife continued to manage admirably, and to serve him and watch over him with unremitting care and devotion. His little Lily was growing in years and a little in stature, and she was developing, the father fancied, remarkable abilities. She had read all the best poetry and romances in his library, and had acquired the art of making verses, an accomplishment in which she took great pleasure. Latterly she had also shown a lively interest in household matters, and had been able to help her mother in such matters as

keeping accounts and superintending expenditure. As a matter of course she was very much with her mother now, and was a faithful and pleasant companion to her. Thus she wound herself more and more closely round her mother's heart, while the love between her and her father grew daily more intelligent and sympathetic. Her mother had decreed that Lily was not to be married to any one in the south, and that the consideration of her marriage was to be deferred until the return of the family to their native place. This resolution she submitted as her humble suggestion to her husband for his consideration and decision. He accepted it with alacrity, as it removed to a distance the evil hour which should separate him from his little daughter. At the time this decision was made his term of service in the post he held was nearly up, and he felt certain he would soon be transferred to another post in the same province.

Mr. Ting had been four years in his first magistracy, when one day orders arrived for him to proceed without delay to take charge of a district in the north-west of the province. This new appointment was in a manner a promotion, but neither Ting nor his family liked the change. It had to be made, however, and Mrs. Ting and her daughter were soon busy with preparations. They had to buy numerous boxes and baskets and superintend the packing of the thousand articles which constitute the movable effects of a Chinese family. Mr. Ting did not inter-

fere in these matters, and kept out of the house. He had his official affairs to attend to, and he was engaged all the time every day in making up accounts and preparing generally to hand over charge to his successor. But before his successor arrived an event occurred, unexpected and disastrous, which changed all the fortunes of Ting's family.

It was the last day of the eighth moon, and Ting had been in his yamên all day from early morning. When he went home and sat down in the private sitting-room of his house in the evening he complained to his wife of headache and ague, and a general feeling of great cold and discomfort. Mrs. Ting at once set about to prepare a certain hot drink in the virtues of which she had great faith, and in the meantime she persuaded her husband to lie down and covered him with abundant bedclothes. Little Lily, who was very sorry to see her father too ill to sit up and talk, helped her mother to prepare the hot draught. She was sent off to bed, however, when he had taken the draught and was preparing to sleep. But he did not sleep and his fever quickly became much worse, so that his wife had to send for the doctor. It was some time before the doctor arrived, and when he came he found his patient raving and in a dreadful condition. The doctor soon saw that his art and skill were of no avail, and he contented himself with giving certain instructions and promising to send some medicine. Mrs. Ting nursed her husband with untiring devotion and did

all in her power to save his life, but he became rapidly worse, his strength failed, and early in the morning of the third day he passed away quietly.

The death of her husband in early or middle life is the greatest sorrow that a Chinese woman can experience. Mrs. Ting was overwhelmed with distress by her calamity and its suddenness. True to her sense of duty, however, she was assiduous in having the ceremonies due to the dead body properly observed. When the body was properly swathed and arrayed it was placed in a good strong coffin. Mrs. Ting then caused a letter to be sent to her husband's brother to tell him of the death and to request instructions. She also had her effects removed from the yamên to an empty house belonging to the official establishment, but in a separate part of the enclosure. Here she expected to remain for some time with her daughter, her husband's coffin being carefully stored.

But she was not to be kept away long from her husband. Ten days after his death Mrs. Ting was suddenly attacked by a sort of fever like that which had carried off her husband. Little Lily at once sent for the doctor and did her utmost to relieve her mother's pain and help to make her at ease. But the mother feared death, and she knew that she was not to recover. The doctor came, and in his usual quiet kind manner did all he could, but it was all in vain. The patient for some time seemed to suffer very much, but she gradually sank into unconsciousness, and

died within forty-eight hours from the time she lay down.

Little Lily was now left an orphan without a relative or friend in all the country. The old northern nurse who had gone with the family when it moved to the south had died two years ago, and the child was now alone among strangers. There was no one to care for her, no one to help her in her trouble, no one even to give her necessary food and drink: she felt deserted and brokenhearted, and she could not think. In her perplexed misery she went to her mother's room where her mother lay, and threw herself on the floor by the bedside. There her tears came, and she wept and wailed in an agony of distress. She called on her mother again and again, cried out against herself as having been bad and undutiful, to have driven her dear mother away from her, to have caused her to leave so suddenly and for ever. From time to time she beat her breast and struck her forehead on the floor, and all her body and soul were rent by the fierce passion of her grief.

The kind doctor, however, soon came round to the house of mourning, and proceeded at once to make arrangements both for the living and the dead. He ordered a coffin and had the proper persons hired to do the last services for Mrs. Ting before interment. He caused the little orphan girl to be taken away from the place to his own house, and he gathered together all her clothes, books, and trinkets that he could find. The yamên employés had plundered the

widow's house of nearly everything they could carry away, and it was only by his prompt authoritative mode of action that the doctor was able to save even a few cases and packages, chiefly of clothing and books.

The doctor was very good and kind to the helpless little orphan girl, whom he took to his home and entrusted to the care of his wife, giving her an account of the sad circumstances in which the child was placed. His wife at first did not like the idea of the strange girl being brought into the family to be treated as a daughter, and she suggested that Lily should be taken in as a household slave. But the doctor would not hear of this, and he had his way; he insisted that the maiden was to be one of the family while she remained with them, and to be treated accordingly. At first Lily was very sad and utterly disconsolate. She often went apart and cried bitter tears of hopeless sorrow. She felt so deserted, so very lonely, missing her father and mother every hour of the day, that she could not take any comfort. But as time went by and the members of the doctor's family showed a sincere desire to cheer her and befriend her in every way her grief was gradually assuaged. She came to take an interest in the work and play of the children, and in the management of the household affairs. The doctor's patients, many of whom were very poor, also aroused her sympathies, but she could do little more than pity and mourn for them Though the doctor's practice was a very

large one, keeping him very much away from home, yet it did not bring him in much money. The explanation of this was that he did not take any fees from the very poor, and did not take to law those who could but would not pay. He had in his house a shop for the compounding and sale of medicines which added largely to his income. All the poor of the district who had parents or children ill came to the doctor's house and told their troubles. Lily often heard these poor creatures' stories and coaxed her aunt, as she called the doctor's wife, for a few "cash" to buy them medicine, or more frequently she had the medicine given gratis and the "cash" added to buy the necessary food.

The doctor's children soon became very much attached to Lily, and she was always a marvel to them. Though only a girl, she was able to read all the labels on the drug-drawers and all the bills and prescriptions, and she could write just like the clerk and the young men who were assistants. Then she had read so many books, and she had so many stories to tell—what endless tales of ghosts and fairies! Even the doctor's wife, though jealous of the girl as clever and attractive, gradually became fond of her, and tried to treat her as one of her own children. Young Lily had the vanity of all Chinese girls and women of liking to have her hair done up in a becoming manner and according to the fashion, and the doctor's wife insisted on doing this for her, though the operation took up her time for about two hours.

More than two years had passed since the deaths of the father and mother of Lily, and yet no news had been received from the Ting family. At length a letter was received from a brother of Mr. Ting, intimating that a messenger was about to be despatched to bring home the two coffins and with them the little orphan. In due time the messenger arrived, and soon after Lily bade good-bye to her friends and started on the long journey north. She was very sorry to have to part with the doctor's family, and all the members of it grieved deeply to have to lose her. The "aunt" busied herself in helping the preparations, and packed up little dainties and comforts for the journey. But although she tried very hard, she could not conceal the grief she felt at having to bid good-bye to her little protégée, a grief which was intensified by the fear that the child would not fare well in the family to which she was now going.

The journey came to an end, and Lily reached her uncle's house, where she received a stiff cold welcome from her aunt, while her uncle paid her little or no attention on her arrival. There were children already in the family, and the mother of these did not like the prospect of having to feed and clothe this unknown niece, a waif of an uncertain character and doubtful up-bringing. Then as the girl was now in her fourteenth year, there was to be the work of searching out and providing for her a suitable husband. There was no help for it, however; the girl had arrived,

and she must be taken in and cared for, and so she was installed as a new member of the family.

Poor Lily was not and could not be happy in her new home. She felt truly alone and miserable, for there was no one to show her any sympathy or kindness. Her uncle took little or no notice of her, and her aunt made her feel and understand that she was dependent on their charity, and that she had no claim on them for anything. Lily here had to do everything for herself. No one in the household cared for her, no one saw that she had the necessaries of life supplied to her. There was no regard for her feelings, and no pity for her sad misfortunes. She had no one to whom she could tell her sorrows, and no one to give her comfort and advice. It was not possible for her to make friends of her cousins, for they treated her with suspicion and disdain, and, of course, she could not go beyond the house.

When a year had elapsed since the arrival of their orphan niece, the uncle and aunt, wishing to be free from the cost of her maintenance, applied themselves to the search of a husband for her. They were pleased to find duty and interest combined in this kind work. But it was not an easy matter to find a family in which there was an eligible son whose parents were willing for him to marry this portionless, friendless maiden. So two or three years passed before a husband was found and a betrothal settled.

The man who was to become the husband of Lily

was our friend, Mêng Ho-nien, who had lately succeeded in the Metropolitan Examinations, and had subsequently obtained a small temporary appointment at the capital. He had returned to his native place for a time, and hearing of Ting's daughter and her great abilities and accomplishments, he had told his parents that he thought she would make a good wife for him. Wishing to please him, Mêng's parents sounded Lily's uncle and aunt on the subject of the desired marriage. The uncle and aunt were very glad to hear the proposal, and gave it their favourable consideration. They gave their niece an excellent character and praised her gentle virtues, declaring that she had the qualifications suitable for the wife of a young official. So in the due course of time the preliminaries were settled, and the couple betrothed, and finally married. A few months after the marriage, Mêng received his first substantive appointment which, as I have said, was a district magistracy in the south-east of the Kuangtung province. The district was not far from that in which the father of Mêng's wife had served, and in which he had died.

Mrs. Mêng took with her to her husband's new post all her own books, pictures, and other family relics. The journey was a long and tedious one, partly by land and partly by water, but at length the end was reached and the mandarin with his family duly installed n his yamên. The town in which Mêng had his official residence was a small

one surrounded by a wall and moat. On the north side at some distance from the town was a long irregular range of hills rising gradually to a height of about 2000 feet for the distant summits, and on the south side was a broad river winding with gentle noiseless current all the year except in the rainy season. From the top of the south wall of the town there was a good view of the river and of the long stone bridge which connected the town with the suburb on the other side of the river. The inhabitants were chiefly merchants, small tradesmen and artisans, with very few families of wealth or influence. In the villages throughout the country districts the people were small farmers and agricultural labourers, with a few petty shopkeepers and artisans along with certain miscellaneous casuals who earned a precarious subsistence by occasional employment at anything. There was much poverty within the district and, as usual, disorder and lawlessness prevailed, though not to a very dangerous extent.

Mêng was a violent, hot-tempered man, rash in speech and action. In the transaction of official business he was too prone to accept the statement of the first comer, and to take measures accordingly. His conduct was governed mainly by impulses, but the impulses were good and generous. He wished to make his yamên a court for the redress of all wrongs and grievances, and to reform its internal administration. With this view he instituted several measures calculated to lessen the power and remove

the opportunities of the yamên employés to extort money from suitors and all others obliged to appear in court, but his efforts had little permanent success.

Mrs. Mêng realised her husband's expectations, proving herself to be a true good wife. She was the bosom friend of her husband, who told her all his worries and troubles, and often asked her advice and assistance. She took, moreover, a great interest in all the domestic and social affairs of the people in and about the town. Not being rich, she could not spend much money among the poor, but she helped them in various other ways. She organised or promoted charitable societies for providing food and clothing for the destitute, and medical comforts for the poor sick. She wrote verses on pretty little scrolls of red paper, signing them, and had the scrolls distributed for sale for charitable purposes. She also painted pictures of birds and flowers, or likenesses of Kuanyin P'isa, and had these sold for the good of the needy. To the destitute sick she sent not only medicines, but also little bowls of toothsome food from her own kitchen. She also tried to cure opium-smokers, and check the spread of the opium-smoking habit, especially among the poor; but here she had little or no success. It distressed her very much to see how many young men of promise, and how many husbands and fathers, were spending their money and wasting their time and, as she thought, ruining body and mind smoking opium. But with the victims of the habit

pills and counsel were all useless, and in the few cases in which she fancied she had effected cures, the hopeless return to the cherished vice made her despair.

At home Mrs. Mêng was a faithful, devoted, and affectionate wife and mother, for although she and her husband began life without any love for each other they soon became closely attached. It is true Mrs. Mêng did not observe the strict rules of formal etiquette in her deportment to her husband, who was rather her equal and friend than her lord and master. She served him indeed in all the functions in which a Chinese wife serves her husband, but her services were rendered joyfully and without formality, and the husband was always willing to reciprocate them.

After Mêng had been above three years in his office in Kuangtung his mother's death obliged him to retire from office and go into mourning. When the period for mourning had expired he was again reported for office, and after a few months he was sent as magistrate to a district in the Prefecture of Foochow. From this he was in due course promoted to be Prefect, and soon after to be Taotai in the north-west of the Fuhkeen province. In the course of a few years he was further promoted to be a Lieutenant-Governor of that province, and he is now Governor of a province in the north-west of the Empire.

Mrs. Mêng has been with her husband in all his posts, and shared with him all the vicissitudes of an official career. They are better friends, and more

united in sympathy and affection than they ever were before. Her stories continue to charm him as in the early days of their married life, and they charm their children, of whom there are four. Mrs. Mêng continues her works of charity and usefulness among the poor and the aged. In the city of her present residence she has been instrumental in establishing, or at keeping in good condition, a large orphanage. She takes a great interest in this institution, makes unexpected visits to it, contributes largely to its income, and helps it in every way in her power. By her soft, gentle ways, her kind words and actions, and by the tact and discretion which she shows in all matters, she has contributed largely to the success of her husband's career. He himself would tell you, as he has told me, that he regards his marriage with Lily, the poor orphan girl, as the result of a beneficent arrangement of Providence, and the beginning of all his good fortune. Let us wish our friend and his wife long life and continued happiness, and a quiet ending in the home of their fathers.

But see, brother, the sun has gone and the moon has begun her eastern climb. It is time for us to part and return to our homes. Go slowly.

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